CYCLE GUIDE

MARCH 1984 $1.50

SPECIAL: TOURING ISSUE

BIG-RIG SHOOTOUT:

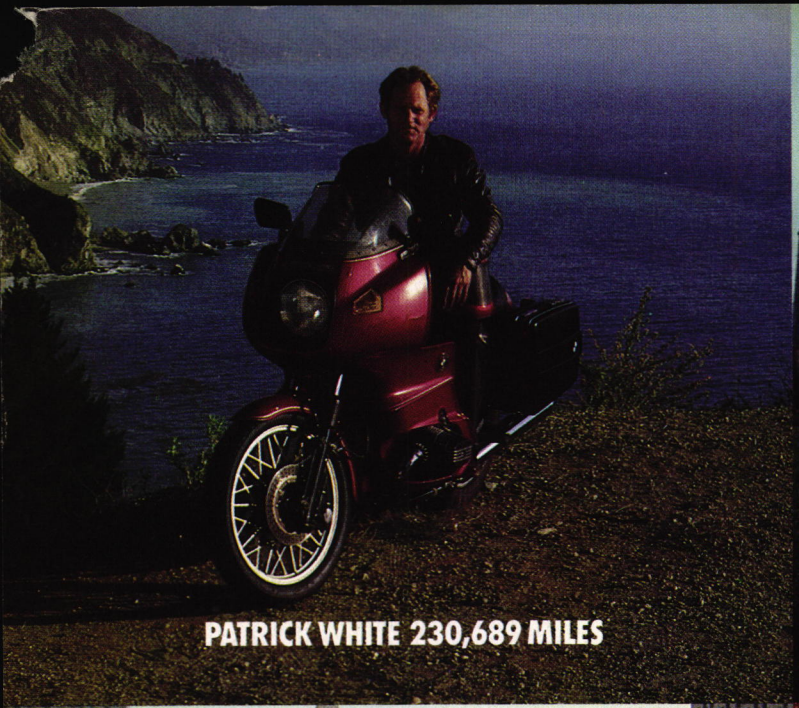
FOUR ARE GREAT– ONE IS *AWESOME*

onda Aspencade

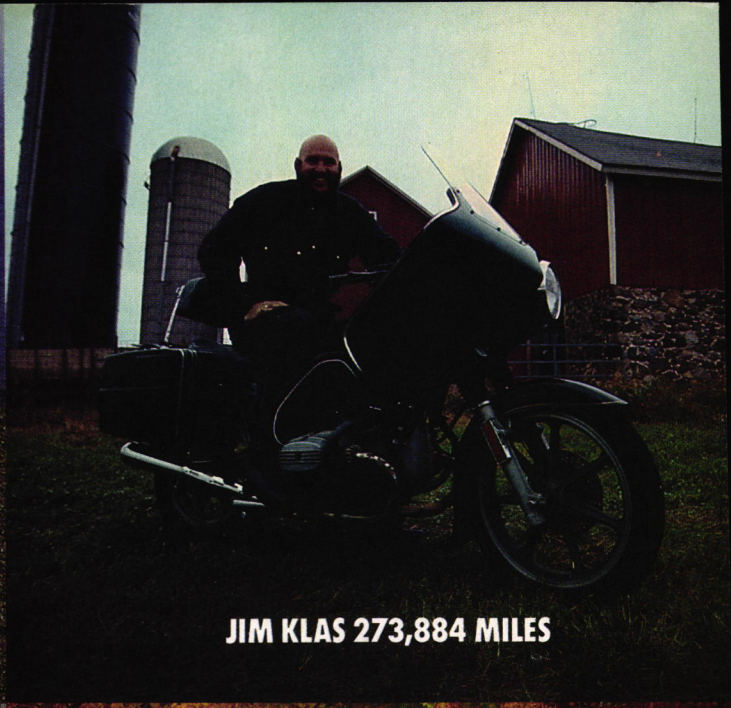
ha Venture Royale

Harley-Davidson FXRT Sport Glide ■ BMW R100RS

DIR 1167
ALAWRL449DOUI4 03 CG MAR86
LARRY LAWRENCE
449 DOUGLAS DR
BROWNSBURG IN 46112

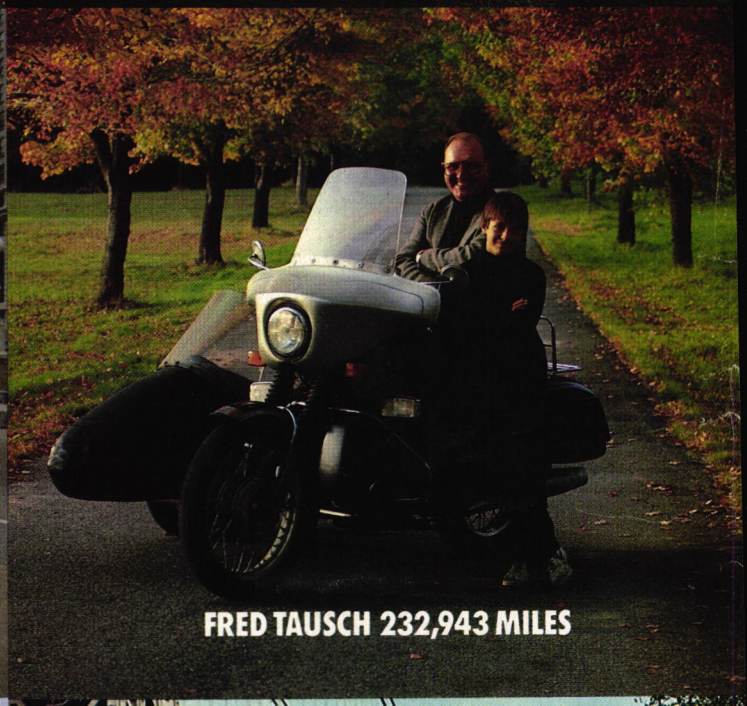


PATRICK WHITE 230,689 MILES

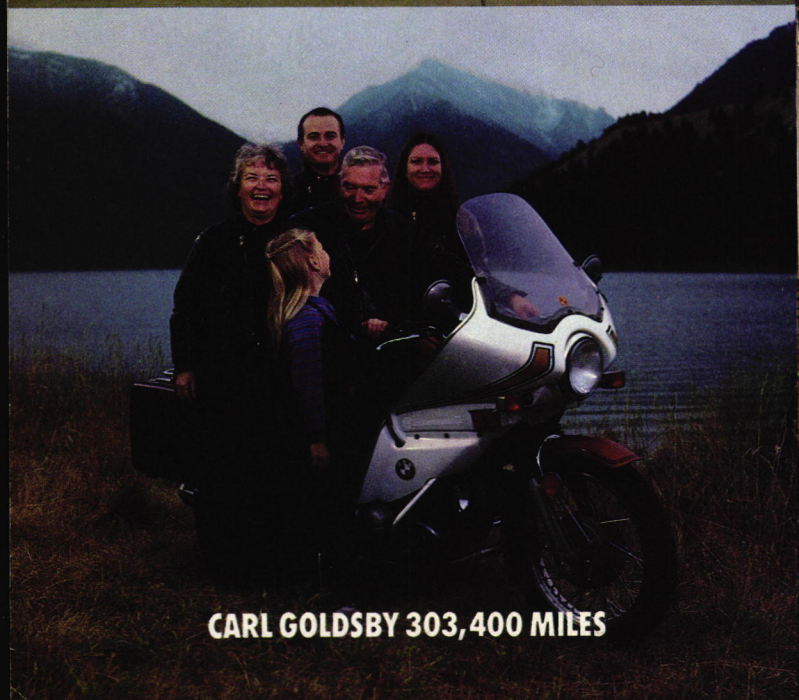


JIM KLAS 273,884 MILES

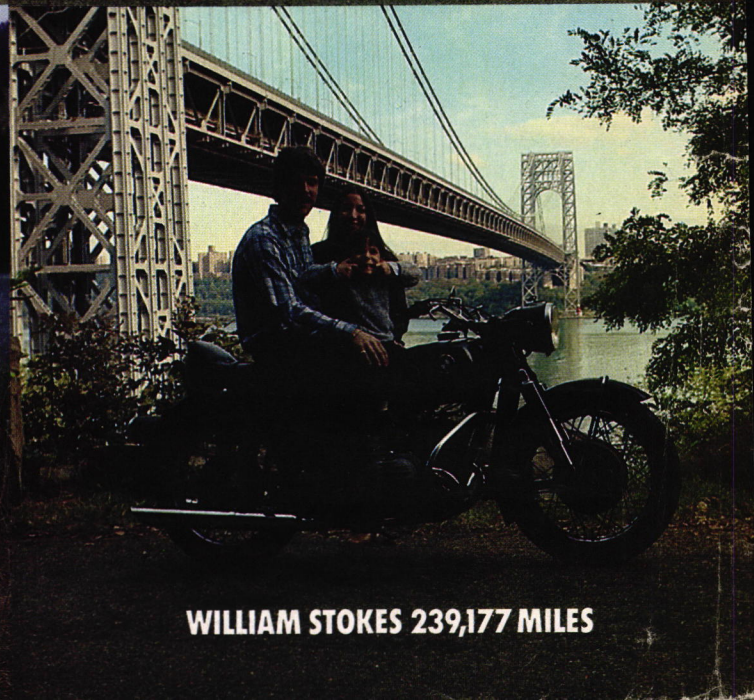
MIGUEL A'LLERIO 385,000 MILES



FRED TAUSCH 232,943 MILES

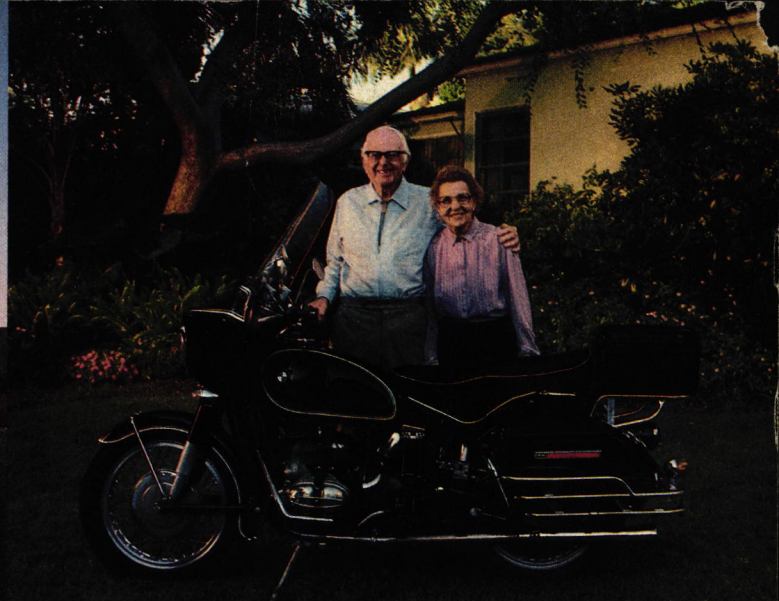


CARL GOLDSBY 303,400 MILES



WILLIAM STOKES 239,177 MILES

LARRY WATSON 274,607 MILES



ELWIN RUSSELL 355,700 MILES

BMW. A MOTORCYCLE ENGINEERED TO PUT MORE DISTANCE BETWEEN YOU AND YOUR NEXT MOTORCYCLE.

"Most motorcycle riders like to think of turning their next quarter-mile. I like to think of turning my next quarter-million."

Those words came from Jim Klas, a man who has ridden the equivalent of from here to the moon on a single motorcycle.

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The kind of warranty a rider like Jim Klas, for one, can put to good use.

Jim has logged over 50,000 miles on his BMW in the last 6 months alone.

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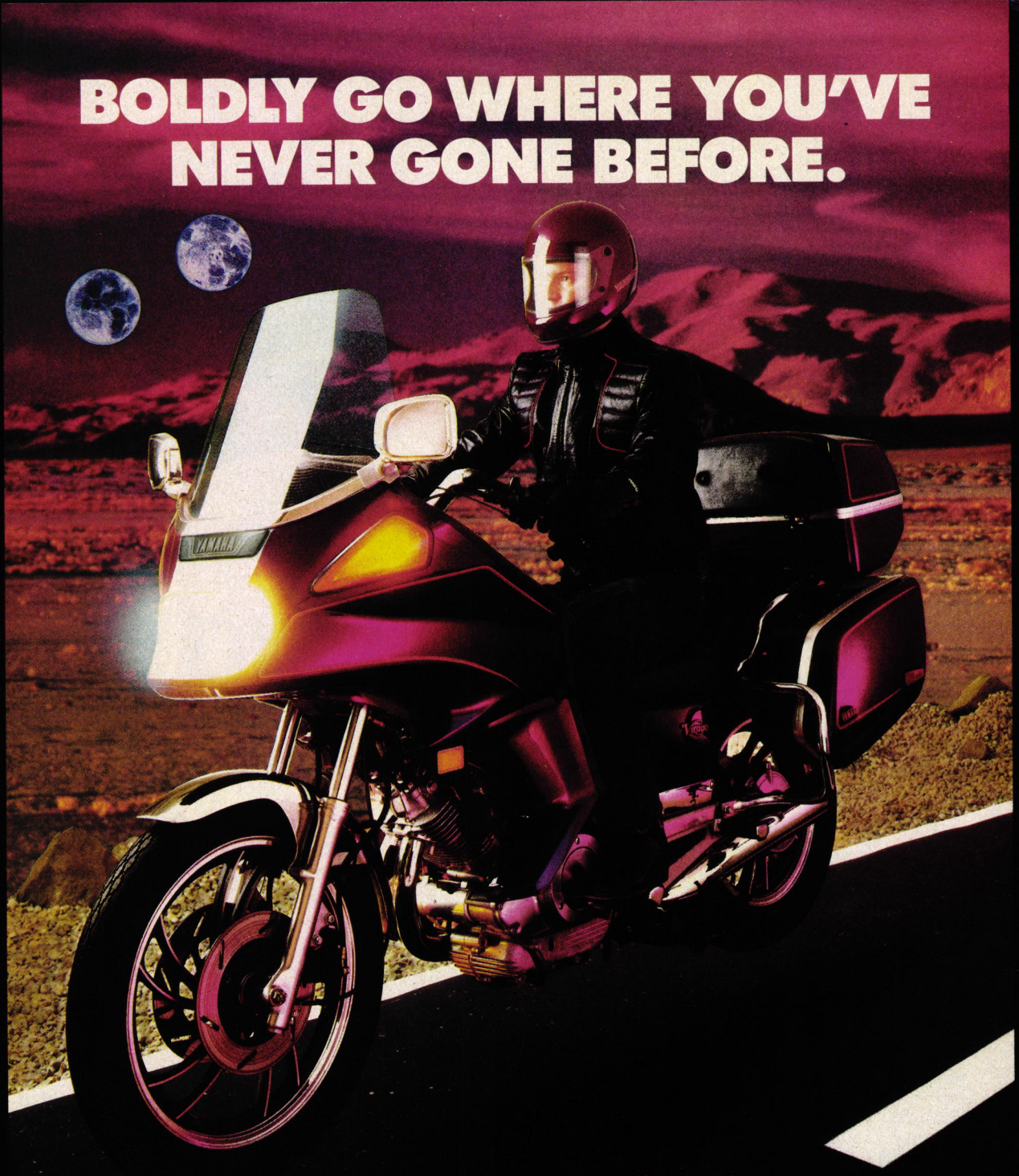

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YAMAHA

Built for the fun of it.

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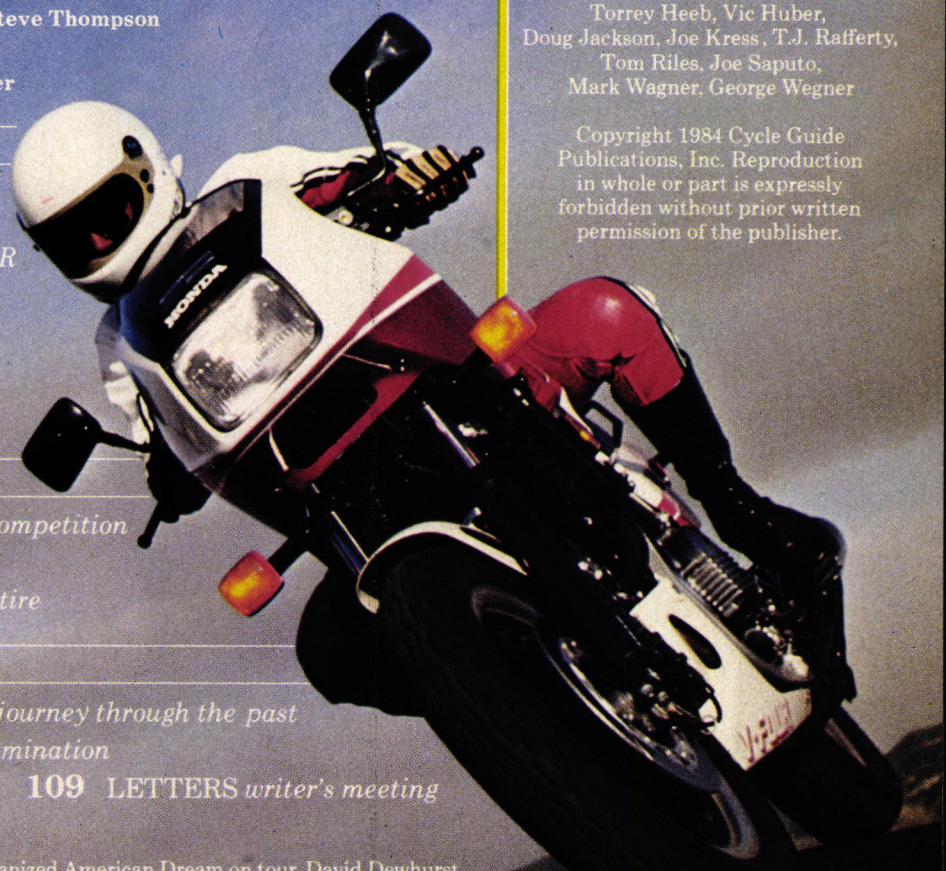

ON THE COVER:
They came thundering over the rise, a mobilized, mechanized American Dream on tour. David Dewhurst captured the scene on film as the four biggest and mightiest of their breed rumbled on in search of the ultimate road, the perfect valley and the ideal sunset. Legend has it that their quest will never end, but yours can—at least if you're looking for the best turn-key tourer—**on page 18.**

CYCLE GUIDE

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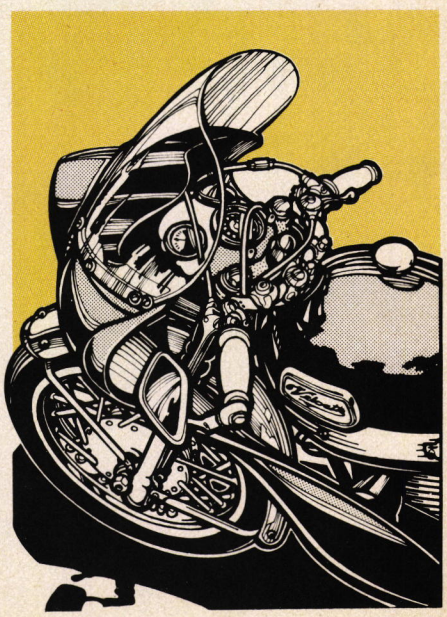

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CYCLE GUIDE'S CYCLE GUIDE

Cycle Guide's catalog of recent test hardware—no brag, just fact.

OFF-ROAD

MAKE & MODEL	ISSUE	TYPE	ENGINE TYPE	WHEEL TRAVEL, IN. FRONT/REAR	WEIGHT, LBS.	RAKE/TRAIL, DEGREES/INCHES	GEARS
Cagiva WMX250-'84	January '84	Motocross	Two-stroke	11.9/12.7	221	28.0/4.65	6
Can-Am Sonic MX-'83	January '83	Motocross	Four-stroke	11.6/12.1	272	28.0/4.24	5
Honda ATC200X-'83	August '83	ATV	Four-stroke	7.2/6.2	285	N/A	5
Honda CR125R-'83	April '83	Motocross	Two-stroke	10.9/12.3	193	27.2/4.13	6
Honda CR250R-'84	February '84	Motocross	Two-stroke	11.7/12.2	216	26.7/4.13	5
Honda CR480R-'83	May '83	Motocross	Two-stroke	12.0/12.3	226	26.0/3.86	5
Honda XR350R-'83	June '83	Enduro	Four-stroke	10.9/10.4	253	26.0/3.94	6
Honda XR500R-'83	October '83	Desert	Four-stroke	11.0/12.2	278	25.5/3.94	5
Husqvarna 250 CR-'83	January '83	Motocross	Two-stroke	11.8/12.7	227	30.0/5.51	6
Husqvarna 430 WR-'83	June '83	Enduro	Two-stroke	10.4/10.6	246	30.0/5.98	6
Husqvarna 500 CR-'83	May '83	Motocross	Two-stroke	11.8/12.8	240	30.0/5.51	4
Husqvarna 500 XC-'83	October '83	Desert	Two-stroke	11.7/12.8	245	30.0/5.98	6
Kawasaki KDX200-'83	July '83	Enduro	Two-stroke	9.8/11.0	213	28.0/4.76	6
Kawasaki KDX250-'83	November '83	Enduro	Two-stroke	10.1/10.7	232	29.0/5.00	6
Kawasaki KX250-'84	February '84	Motocross	Two-stroke	11.6/12.3	220	28.5/4.65	5
Kawasaki KX500-'83	May '83	Motocross	Two-stroke	11.7/11.9	232	29.0/4.80	5
KTM MC 495-'83	May '83	Motocross	Two-stroke	11.9/12.4	249	28.0/4.21	4
Maico 490 Sand Spider-'83	October '83	Desert	Two-stroke	12.0/12.7	243	27.0/4.72	5
Maico 490 Spider-'83	May '83	Motocross	Two-stroke	11.8/12.2	240	27.0/4.72	4
Suzuki ALT50-'83	June '83	ATV	Two-stroke	N/A	90	N/A	1
Suzuki RM125-'83	October '83	Motocross	Two-stroke	10.7/11.8	200	29.5/4.76	6
Suzuki RM250-'84	February '84	Motocross	Two-stroke	11.8/12.9	220	27.8/4.41	5
Suzuki RM500-'83	May '83	Motocross	Two-stroke	11.9/12.8	234	29.7/4.84	4
Yamaha IT250-'83	November '83	Enduro	Two-stroke	11.0/11.3	233	28.0/4.65	6
Yamaha TT600K-'83	August '83	Trail	Four-stroke	11.7/10.8	280	28.0/4.65	5
Yamaha YZ250-'84	February '84	Motocross	Two-stroke	11.3/12.6	214	28.0/4.69	5
Yamaha YZ490-'83	May '83	Motocross	Two-stroke	11.8/12.5	227	28.5/4.72	4

STREET

MAKE & MODEL	ISSUE	ENGINE TYPE*	DISPLACEMENT, CC	QUARTER-MILE, SEC./MPH	TOP SPEED, MPH	WEIGHT, LBS.	FUEL CONSUMPTION, MPG	STOPPING DISTANCE FROM 60 MPH, FT.
BMW R100RS-'84	March '84	2C/G	979.9	13.172/100.11	125	495	27–50	148
H-D FXRS Low Glide-'84	January '84	45 deg. 2D/F	1337.7	13.917/94.57	112	575	38–48	140
H-D FXRT Sport Glide-'84	March '84	45 deg. 2D/F	1337.7	13.928/93.65	112	639	34–61	140
H-D FLTC Tour Glide-'84	March '84	45 deg. 2D/F	1337.7	14.603/88.75	107	774	39–54	152
H-D XLS Roadster-'83	April '83	45 deg. 2D/F	997.6	13.842/93.94	106	515	43–55	138
H-D XLX-61-'83	June '83	45 deg. 2D/F	997.6	13.459/95.94	106	488	40–72	128
Honda CBX400F-'82	October '82	4A/F	399.1	13.588/96.46	110	402	34–58	128
Honda CB1100F-'83	January '83	4A/F	1062.2	11.224/119.84	144†	550	33–46	135
Honda CX650 Custom-'83	May '83	80 deg. 2E/G	673.5	12.560/102.97	119	454	38–48	124
Honda CX650 Turbo-'83	March '83	80 deg. 2E/G	673.5	12.093/111.66	137†	538	25–44	124
Honda FT500 Ascot-'82	August '82	1 B/F	497.7	14.915/83.72	97†	360	47–54	146
Honda GL1200A Aspencade-'84	March '84	4C/G	1181.9	13.156/98.14	118	744	33–46	141
Honda Nighthawk 550-'83	July '83	4A/G	572.3	12.461/102.97	114	429	37–49	125
Honda Nighthawk 650-'83	December '83	4A/G	656.0	12.287/108.04	122	451	29–51	127
Honda Nighthawk S-'83	February '84	4A/G	696.7	12.048/109.75	125	492	28–45	125
Honda V45 Interceptor-'83	May '83	90 deg. 4D/F	748.1	11.963/111.66	138	511	31–40	116
Honda V45 Sabre-'83	September '83	90 deg. 4D/G	748.1	12.179/111.11	128	514	33–46	130
Honda VF400F-'83	September '83	90 deg. 4D/F	399.1	13.588/96.35	112	402	34–51	127
Honda VT500 Ascot-'83	October '83	52 deg. 2D/G	490.9	13.628/93.75	112	411	41–61	129
Honda VT750C Shadow-'83	April '83	45 deg. 2D/G	749.6	12.906/100.78	127	484	48–55	132
Kawasaki GPz550-'83	June '83	4A/F	553.8	12.647/102.97	132†	438	42–62	144
Kawasaki GPz750-'83	February '83	4A/F	739.0	12.167/109.22	134†	498	35–51	136
Kawasaki GPz750 Turbo-'83	July '83	4A/F	739.0	11.225/123.53	146	514	N/A	N/A
Kawasaki GPz1100-'82	May '82	4A/F	1089.8	11.328/119.36	137†	534	35–48	127
Kawasaki KZ550 Spectre-'83	May '83	4A/G	553.8	13.348/96.77	116†	441	44–56	137
Kawasaki KZ750-L3-'83	January '83	4A/F	739.0	12.095/108.95	134†	487	47–53	132
Kawasaki KZ1000R-'82	November '82	4A/F	998.6	11.849/116.73	134†	505	35–49	129
Kawasaki Voyager-'84	March '84	6A/G	1286.1	13.346/97.61	116	882	28–44	142
Laverda RGS 1000-'84	December '83	3A/F	980.8	12.565/106.50	130	556	25–40	140
Suzuki GS450E-'83	January '83	2A/F	448.2	14.236/93.16	106†	384	39–49	131
Suzuki GS450G Automatic-'83	February '83	2A/G	448.2	16.412/82.34	94†	410	36–59	143
Suzuki GS550E-'83	June '83	4A/F	572.3	12.593/104.04	120	443	39–47	135
Suzuki GS650M Katana-'83	November '83	4A/G	673.9	13.238/101.01	122†	491	49–60	137
Suzuki GS750E-'83	August '83	4A/F	747.4	11.893/112.92	131†	485	35–50	135
Suzuki GS1100E-'82	May '82	4A/F	1074.9	11.203/119.30	141†	530	37–49	132
Suzuki GS1100G-'82	September '82	4A/G	1074.9	11.919/114.21	137†	555	42–48	138
Suzuki GS1100GK-'82	October '82	4A/G	1074.9	12.579/104.52	137†	647	31–44	155
Suzuki XN85 Turbo-'83	March '83	4A/F	673.9	12.381/107.14	132†	521	34–46	120
Yamaha RZ350-'83	December '83	2A/F†‡	347.4	13.343/98.46	112	346	N/A	N/A
Yamaha XJ650 Turbo-'83	March '83	4A/G	653.4	13.059/103.32	126†	543	35–53	126
Yamaha XJ900 Seca-'83	September '83	4A/G	853.2	11.949/113.20	128	499	34–58	135
Yamaha XZ550R Vision-'83	November '83	70 deg. 2D/G	552.9	13.422/95.23	112	483	39–47	124
Yamaha 920 Virago-'83	April '83	75 deg. 2D/G	920.0	12.835/101.46	108	503	38–45	138
Yamaha Venture Royale-'84	March '84	70 deg. 4D/G	1197.6	12.759/101.46	124	752	37–53	137

***A**-Transverse Vertical, **B**-Vertical (single-cylinder only), **C**-Horizontally Opposed, **D**-Tandem Vee, **E**-Transverse Vee, **F**-Chain Final Drive, **G**-Shaft Final Drive, **H**-Belt Final Drive
† indicates a calculated top speed; †† indicates a two-stroke engine

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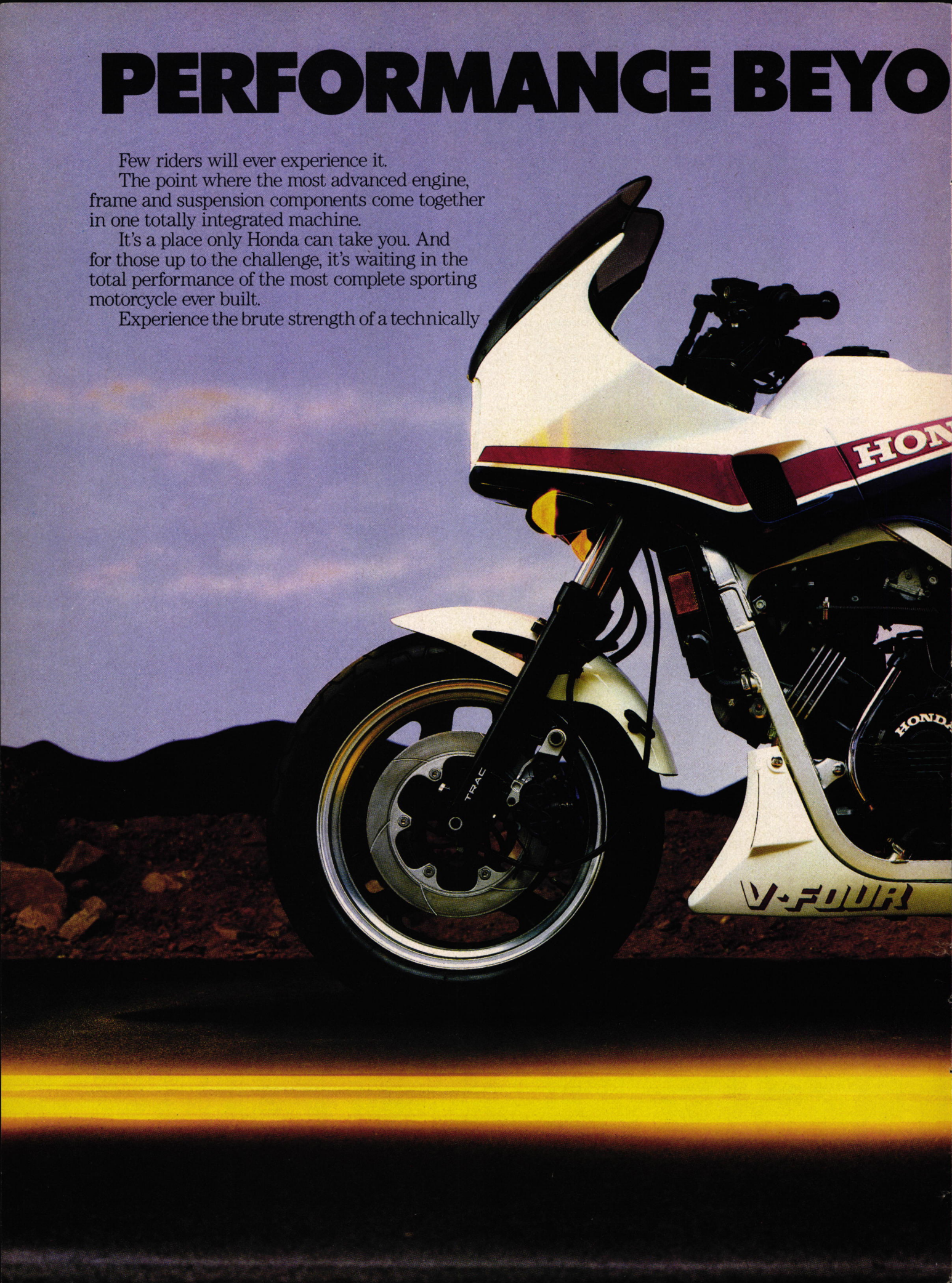

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Contact Points

Misguided Touring

The slow road to rumination.

• About this notion that motorcycles reflect their owners' personalities: Does your choice of machine really exhibit any significant aspect of your character?

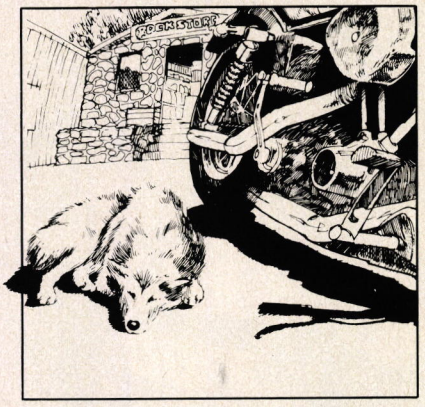
I suppose. The machine you choose might "say something" about your "lifestyle." Or your credit rating. But what it says might not necessarily be true. In my case, a preference for sporty bikes had got me tagged as a "non-touring" rider around here.

Maybe I was just tweaked by the label. Hell, I've made my share of long rides. *Non*-touring rider, indeed. But then, as disgruntlement changed lanes and became self-evaluation, I had to admit to a limited perspective. My touring picture had been framed by a mental telephoto lens, rather than a wide-angle with considerable depth-of-field.

My narrow focus definition could be called sprint-touring: Getting from Here to There quickly; eating lousy food, riding until pain completely displaces pleasure, sleeping in motels. Hauling, as they say, ass.

What, I wondered, if one component were removed from the sprint-touring equation: speed. Rather than a 130-mph motorcycle that would easily cruise at 90, how about a bike most comfortable at no more than a steady 65 mph? By restraining the pace I could dial the sprint impulse down to the jog mode, and thus discover the pastoral rewards of more civilized touring. Or so I theorized.

And I knew just the right bike. In the garage of my friend Jimmie sat a 1967 Triumph TR6, with fewer than 5,000 original miles. Not only that, Jimmie had been thinking of a long jog himself, and suggested I ride the Triumph and he would take his 1975 Sportster. Together we'd mosey out to the desert and visit the semi-legendary Hank "Seldom Seen" Slattery, be certified tourists for a spell and then amble home. A leisurely 2000-mile loop aboard these bikes would surely shake out some truths of traditional touring, if not the fillings in our teeth. So we gave the Harley an extra sprocket tooth in front, calmed the Triumph's weeping with new fork seals, and hit the long but rarely winding road. For on the outward-bound leg, a good seven-eighths of our riding would be Interstately.



© 1984 MARK R. WAGNER

Now, I've been as guilty as any sprinter when it comes to smug disdain for freeways, expressways, thruways, parkways, beltways and turnpikes. Only reason to use the Superslab was to get to the twisties more quickly or to make it to work on time. But now, chuffing merrily along at 60, I came to realize that anti-slab snobbery is merely another squinty perception. The highways serve not only to compress great distances into smaller time frames, but also permit casual floating in the Interstate stream.

Down these lazy rivers of macadam we made our way eastward. With no need to "make time," the ride settled into series of slow motion sequences of self-generated mental images, projected on the desert sky of Optimist Blue. Memories of past rides surfaced, old friends and new possibilities. My entire anxiety circuit had been disconnected.

Part of this pleasant state obtains from the absence of any real need to "ride" the motorcycle. I had become simply an attendant, making occasional instrument checks, minor control adjustments. Operating the machine took so little attention that my imagination was free to indulge in meditative motorcycling. What a kicker. On an old British twin and a straight-line highway, I had rediscovered the roads of rumination.

Of course, long periods of this mobile cud-chewing can grow boring, but jog-touring offers yet another fortuitous reward. These vibratory vehicles enforce the need to stop more often. Since the Triumph tended to paralyze the right hand after two hours, and the Harley seat produced a case of glazed gluteus, we found ourselves taking intermissions in some new and unusual places. Places that in the sprint mode would have surely passed unnoticed.

For example: Several signs in Baker, California, informed us that we were in "Bun Boy Country." And, according to a crayoned placard, one local entertainment is "DUCK RACES." We could only speculate on the nature of such competition, and whether or not it was popular with area bun boys. Perhaps the best sign, near Blanding, Utah, appeared to be a permanent highway department marker. Alone at the roadside, apropos of nothing particular, it reads simply "THANK YOU."

But one item for which the jog-tourer reserves his greatest thanks, and most money, is food. Roadside feasts take on overtones of religious ritual, and small cafés seem to glow like shrines of restorative sustenance. Had we been piloting intercontinental road-rockets, and obsessed with speed and arrival times, would we have unknowingly deleted the chocolate chip cookies at the Poplar Place in Moab, Utah? Or the banana cream pie at Hershey's ("The Best Little Sandwich Shop in the West") in Williams, Arizona? And how about the absolute, world-record, reigning deity of cinnamon rolls at Binders Hi-Way Trailer Park and Café in Kirkland?

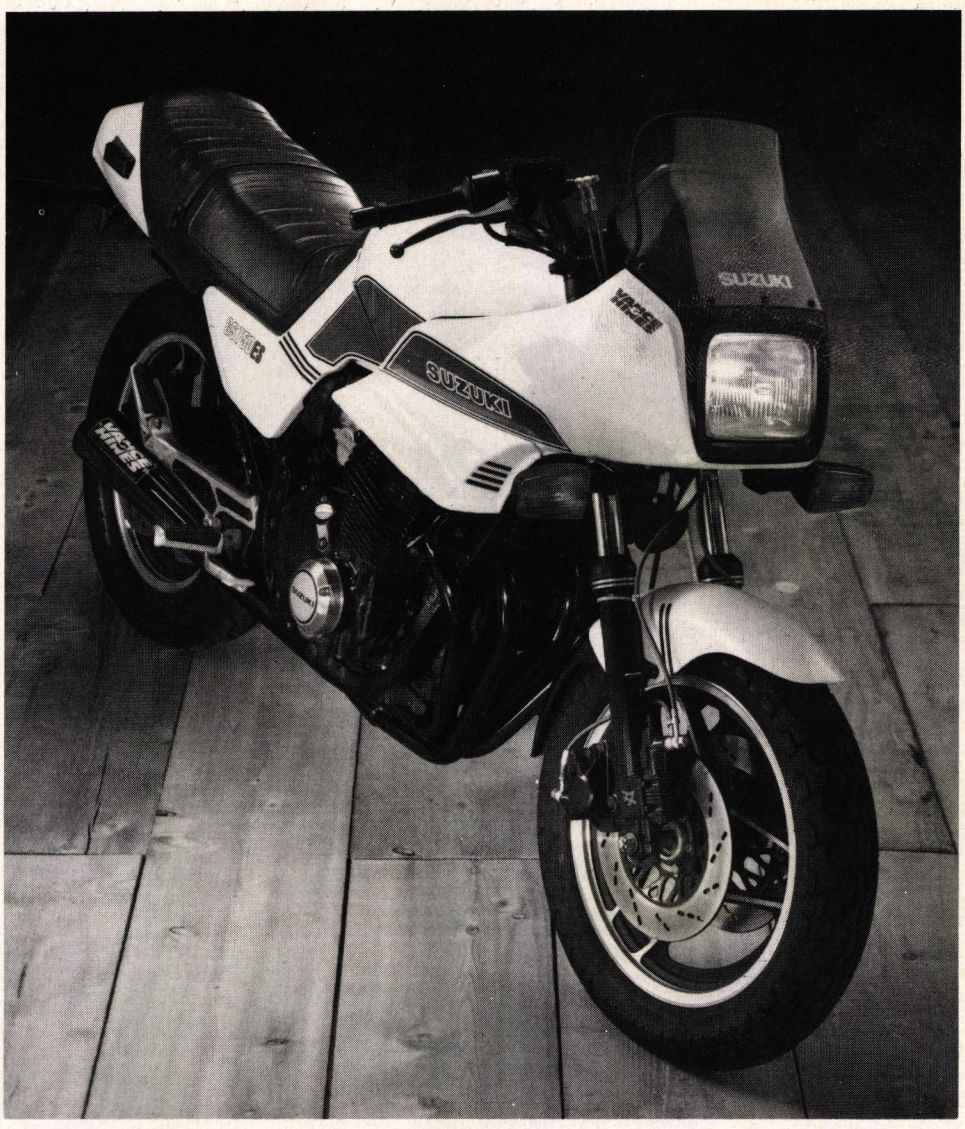
These and other gustatory revelations are now permanently recorded in my jog-touring log, relished in memory and checked for some future return. I am a better, if chubbier, person for having known them.

Both the Triumph and Harley completed this voyage with nary a cough, glitch or mechanical mishap. They delivered us to such hole-in-the-wall spots as the House-in-the-Rock near Moab, Albert Christensen's tribute to the power of dreams and dynamite. How often do you see a man-made cave with two stuffed horses and a mule in the living room, and curiously stylized religious portraits on every wall?

The self-imposed speed limitation did transform my touring perspective. Whether I can transfer the technique to newer luxury tourers remains to be seen. But at least I'll try to not be seduced by the speed, comfort and convenience, nor to overlook those important signs.

Duck races? —*T. J. Rafferty*

Performance with Style



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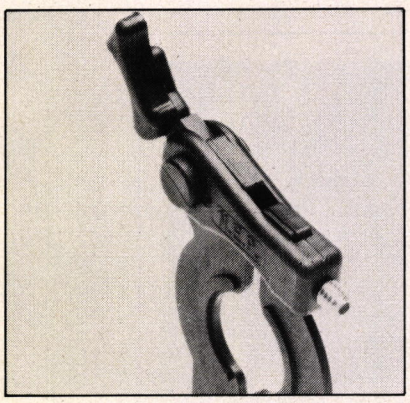
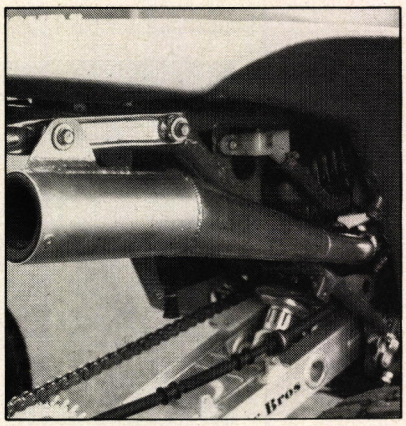


Long-Distance Assistance: Riders who could use a hand with throttle chores on long rides should take a look at the NEP cruise-control. The friction-type throttle-lock is molded in black DuPont nylon, and comes with its own Allen wrench for simple installation. NEP makes throttle-locks to fit Honda, Yamaha, Kawasaki and Suzuki motorcycles. Suggested retail price for the throttle-lock is $11.95. For further information, contact NEP Sales, Dept. CG, 3439 Ocean View, Glendale, California 91208.

Grand Introduction: Nava has introduced the Grand Prix, its first fiberglass helmet. These pressure-molded fiberglass helmets feature a brushed velour interior and adjustable-position visor. The Snell '80-approved helmets are available in either single colors or two-tone paint jobs. Single colors include black, white, silver, burgundy, red and blue. Two-tone helmets are available in black with gold, or silver with anthracite, blue or candy apple red. Suggested retail price for the single-color helmets is $139.95, while the two-color helmets retail for $149.95. The Grand Prix is available in S–XXL sizes. For more information, contact Nava USA, Dept. CG, 5729 Ward Ave., Virginia Beach, Virginia 23455.

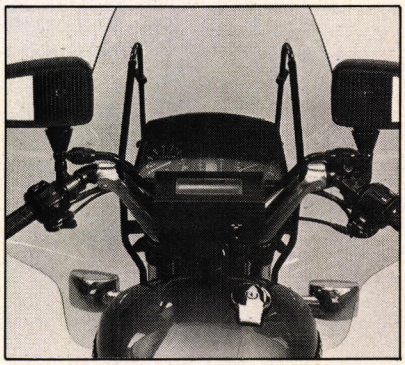
Gypsy Garb: GPz owners who'd like to complete the look that Kawasaki started might be interested in the three-piece cowling sets by Targa Accessories. The fiberglass body parts are finished in either Firecracker Red or Galaxy Silver, and are available to fit the GPz550, GPz750 and GPz1100. The cowlings come complete with all mounting hardware, and Targa claims the body panels allow access to the oil filter and sparkplugs, and do not restrict airflow to the engine. Suggested retail price for any of the kits is $179.90. For more information, contact Targa Accessories Inc., Dept. CG, 10 McLaren Suite B, Irvine, California 92714.

Giving Us The Boot: And the gloves. Dragracers Terry Vance and Byron Hines are taking it to the streets with a line of boots and gloves from Vance & Hines Racing. The boots are made from top-quality cowhide with an elastic expander at the top for a snug fit. V & H claims the boots have a non-slip sole and good arch support. The gloves are ventilated and feature a velcro closure at the wrist. The boots are available in sizes 6–12, and have a suggested retail price of $74.95. The gloves are available in S–XL sizes, with a suggested retail price of $24.95. The boots and gloves are available from Vance & Hines Racing, Dept. CG, 14010 Marquardt, Santa Fe Springs, California 90670.



More or Less: Both actually—White Bros. claims more power and less weight from its pipe and silencer combination for the Honda ATC 200X. The exhaust system consists of a steel header pipe with a repackable, aluminum megaphone silencer. White Bros. states that the system mounts easily and the headpipe uses the stock heatshield. Suggested retail price for the exhaust system is $84.95, and it's available from White Bros., Dept. CG, 11750 Seaboard Circle, Stanton, California 90680.

Noise Reduction: Music lovers impressed with Yamaha's Music 'N Motion sound system but put off by the price should listen up. Yamaha has announced a $70 price reduction on the handlebar-mounted sound system, which brings the price down to $259.95. The Music 'N Motion sound system includes a Toshiba KTS 3 cassette deck, 50-watt amplifier and a pair of speaker/mirror assemblies. Yamaha claims the sound system can be adapted to most motorcycles with handlebar-mounted mirrors. The Music 'N Motion system is available through Yamaha dealers.



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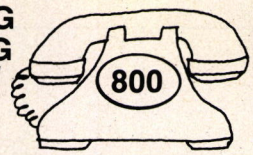

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MR90H18	FRONT	66.75
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110/90V18	REAR	55.75
120/90V18	REAR	62.75
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130/90H16	REAR	56.00
140/90H16	REAR	58.00
130/90H17	REAR	56.50
120/90H18	REAR	53.00
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450H17	REAR	54.00
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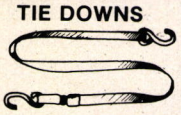

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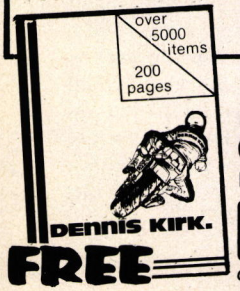

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350H19	FRONT	49.75

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130/90V17	REAR	70.75
130/90V17	RWL	82.75
400V18	REAR	63.75
425/85V18	REAR	65.75
130/90V18	REAR	65.75

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90/90H19	BW	44.75
90/90H19	RWL	46.75
100/90H19	BW	46.75
100/90H19	RWL	49.75
110/90H19	BW	49.75
110/90H19	RWL	51.75

MAG MOPUS-REAR

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130/90H16	RWL	53.75
140/90H16	RWL	59.75
130/90H17	BW	53.75
130/90H17	RWL	56.75
110/90H18	BW	51.75
425/85H18	BW	51.75
120/90H18	BW	53.75
130/90H18	BW	56.75
130/90H18	RWL	59.75

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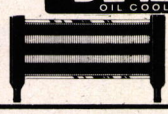

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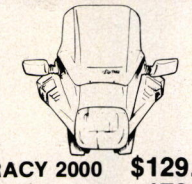

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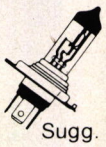

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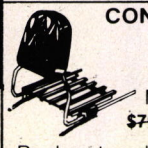

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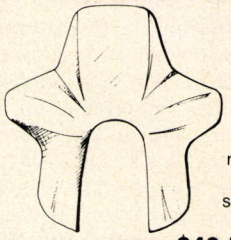

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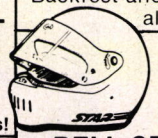
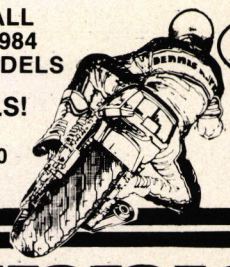


ALL 1984 MODELS



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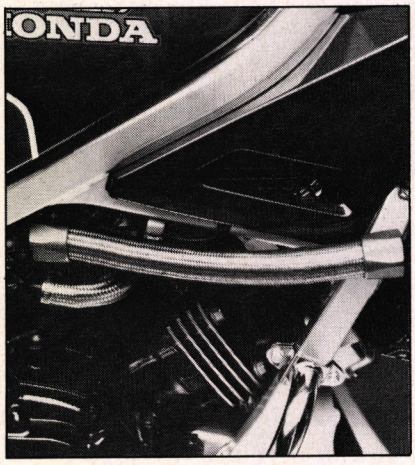
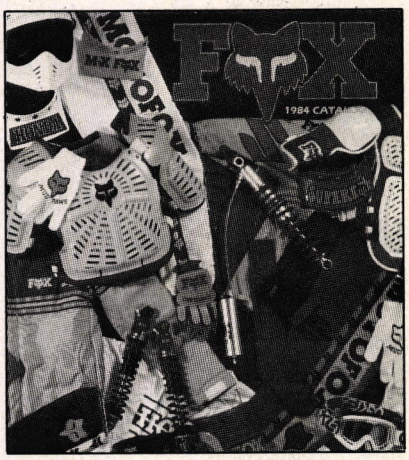
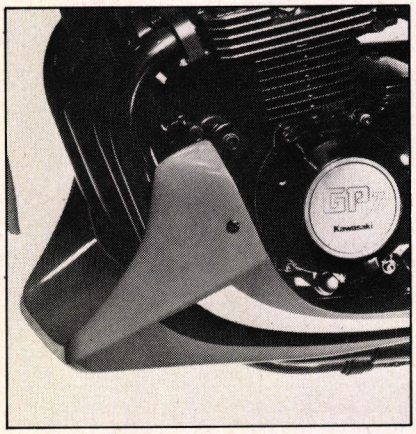
Rustled Interceptors: Actually it's Russelled, as in Russell Performance, which now has braided steel radiator hoses and oil lines for Honda Interceptors. The set replaces the stock rubber hoses with aircraft-quality steel-reinforced hoses and sleeves, and includes anodized fittings at the hose ends. The set has a retail price of $94.99, and is available from Russell Performance, Dept. CG, 20420 S. Susana Rd., Carson, California 90745.





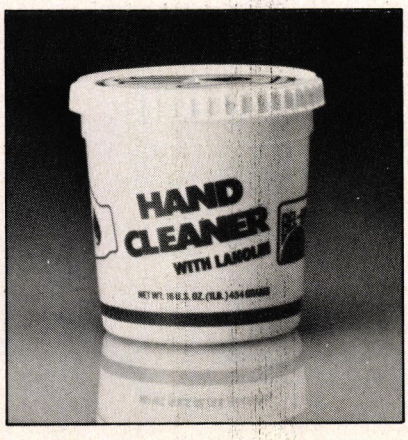
Fox Facts: Looking for a bit of light reading for the winter? Take a look at the Moto-X Fox 1984 catalog. This 48-page booklet covers the entire line of Moto-X Fox products for both street and dirt riding, including an expanded line of SuperStreet Products and the Fox Factory "Twin-Clicker" Shox. The Fox catalog is available for $1, for postage and handling, from Moto-X, Dept. CG, 520 McGlincy Lane, Campbell, California 95008.

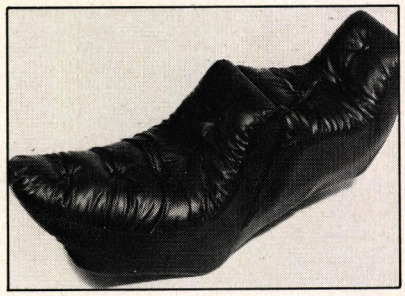
Lancer Answers: If you like the styling of full leathers, but can't handle the price, Lancer Leathers might have a solution to your quandary. Lancer's nylon racing suit is styled like full leathers, but is made of 420-denier nylon pack cloth. Lancer claims the fully lined suit is cooler and more flexible than leather, and is completely washable as well. The suit is available in either a one-piece style or as a zip-together two-piece outfit. Base price for the suit is $189.50, and the company notes that it also does custom work. For more information on the suit, contact Lancer Leathers, Dept. CG, 4611 N. 12th St., Phoenix, Arizona 85014.



Cowled Kaw: If the standard looks of the GPz 750 or 1100 aren't racy enough for you, consider adding an Aer-Wedge from Pacifico. The air dam is constructed of high-impact-strength ABS plastic, Pacifico claims, and is coated with high-luster polyurethane in either red or silver, to match the stock GPz colors. The air dam also includes GPz-style graphics. Suggested retail price for the Aer-Wedge is $84.95. For more information, write Pacifico Inc., Dept. CG, 1625 SE Hogan Rd., Gresham, Oregon 97030.

Lubed Fingers: After years of producing products that get your hands dirty, Bel-Ray has finally introduced a product to clean up the mess you make. Bel-Ray Hand Cleaner removes dirt, grease, grime and paint, the company claims. The hand cleaner is formulated with lanolin, and is available in 16-ounce tubs. Retail price for the cleaner is $2.95. For more information on Bel-Ray products, write Bel-Ray Company Inc., Dept. CG, 10015 G Muirlands Blvd., Irvine, California 92714.





Saddle Up: Magna and Virago owners who think the stock seats are a pain should take a look at the Mustang Duke saddles available from Al Simmons. Compared with the stock seats, these custom-style seats give increased back support for both rider and passenger, Simmons claims, and feature additional cushioning. The seats are built on a reinforced fiberglass base and are upholstered in button-tufted Naugahyde. Suggested retail price for the seat is $159, and it's available for all V45 and V65 Magnas, as well as the '81–'82 Virago 750s and 920s. For further information, contact Al Simmons Company Inc., Dept. CG, Town Hill Rd., Terryville, Connecticut 06786-0283.

Nava '84

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Nava Engineering, Fiberglass Construction
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Nava is pleased to announce their first-ever fiberglass helmet, the Nava Grand Prix. The Grand Prix is a premium quality helmet, sporting crisp Italian styling, outstanding graphics, and a sleek aerodynamic shape.

The Grand Prix's shell is precision molded using the latest computer controlled pressure molding equipment. This process guarantees outstanding strength, complete uniformity, and total quality control.

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Of course, the Grand Prix passes all international certifications including SNELL 80, DOT and BSI.

The Grand Prix joins the world's best selling line of helmets. From the inexpensive GT to the incredible Fibernava, Nava helmets are #1 in the world—by design.

Mail Orders: The Grand Prix is available in two finishes, single color and dual color: Single Colors—Black, White, Silver, Burgundy, Red, and Metallic Blue. Retail Price: $139.95. Dual Colors—Anthracite/Silver (Shown), Blue/Silver, Candy Apple Red/Silver, and Black/Gold. Retail Price $149.95. Sizes are Small, Medium, Large, X-Large and XX Large. Send check or money order including $10.00 per helmet shipping to: Nava USA A division of Crown Trading Co. • 5729 Ward Avenue • Virginia Beach, VA. 23455

NAVA

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This V-rated, street-legal, endurance racing tire is fast becoming a legend in its own time . . . compiling an incredible list of victories, including three consecutive W.E.R.A. 24 Hr. Endurance Racing Championships.

And bad news just got worse for the competition . . . introducing the new Sport Elite front. It's radical. The front pattern is now matched to the patented Elite rear to increase the overall contact patch and deliver even more responsive handling.

Now, chances are, you'll never scrape your kneepads on the asphalt of Daytona. But if you occasionally nick a footpeg on your favorite canyon run, you want the tires with the racetrack performance that brings the competition to their knees . . . Dunlop Sport Elite.

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Dunlop Sport Elite®

Engineered to straighten the road.

Before we fire up the mixers to blend our remarkable rubber compounds, we zero in on a target of performance.

For the Sport Elite, the bullseye is V-rated ultra sport performance . . . high adhesion for accelerating, braking and cornering . . . wet or dry.

The black loaded, oil extended, high styrene polymer K391 compound is formulated for high hysteresis, low dynamic stiffness.

Hysteresis measures the compound's resistance to bounce. Raising the hysteresis increases traction and reduces stopping distance. In the K391 Sport Elite, high hysteresis is achieved through the use of very fine, high structure carbon black.

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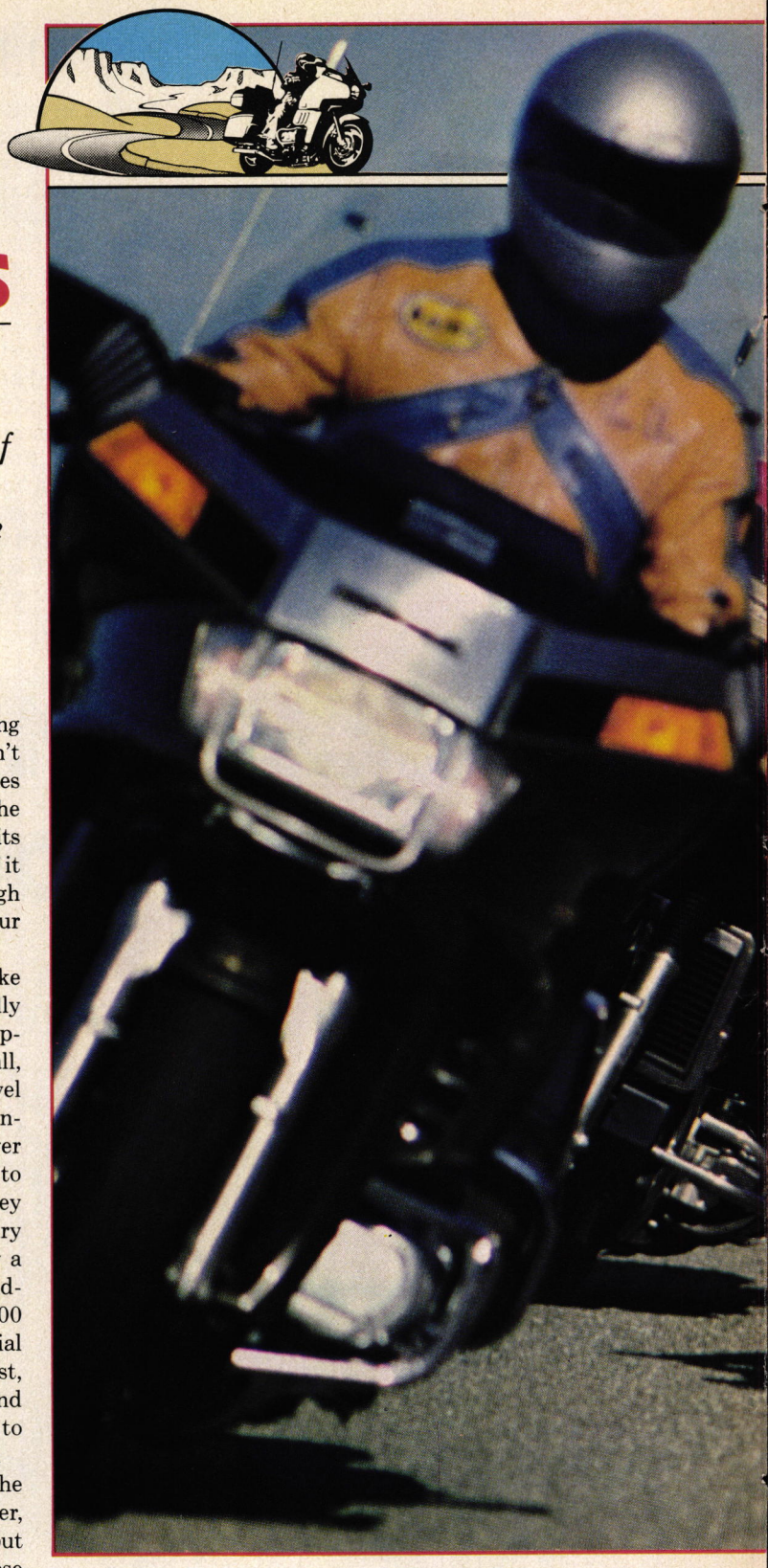
TOURING COMPARISON TEST:

Battle Of The Big Rigs

If you're looking for a full-dress tourer, you'll find four mighty impressive turn-key machines to choose from. And one of them not only is the best of the four, it's the finest all-around touring motorcycle ever built.

BY PAUL DEAN



If there's even a trace of gypsy in your soul, a turn-key touring motorcycle will bring it out of you in a big hurry. And you don't even have to actually *ride* one of these two-wheeled motorhomes for that to happen; just poke around one for a while on the showroom floor. Check out its spacious luggage, settle into its all-day saddle, marvel at its high-tech entertainment center if it has one. Next thing you know, you'll be staring dreamily through its windshield, longing to be headed off into the sunset on your way to Someplace Else.

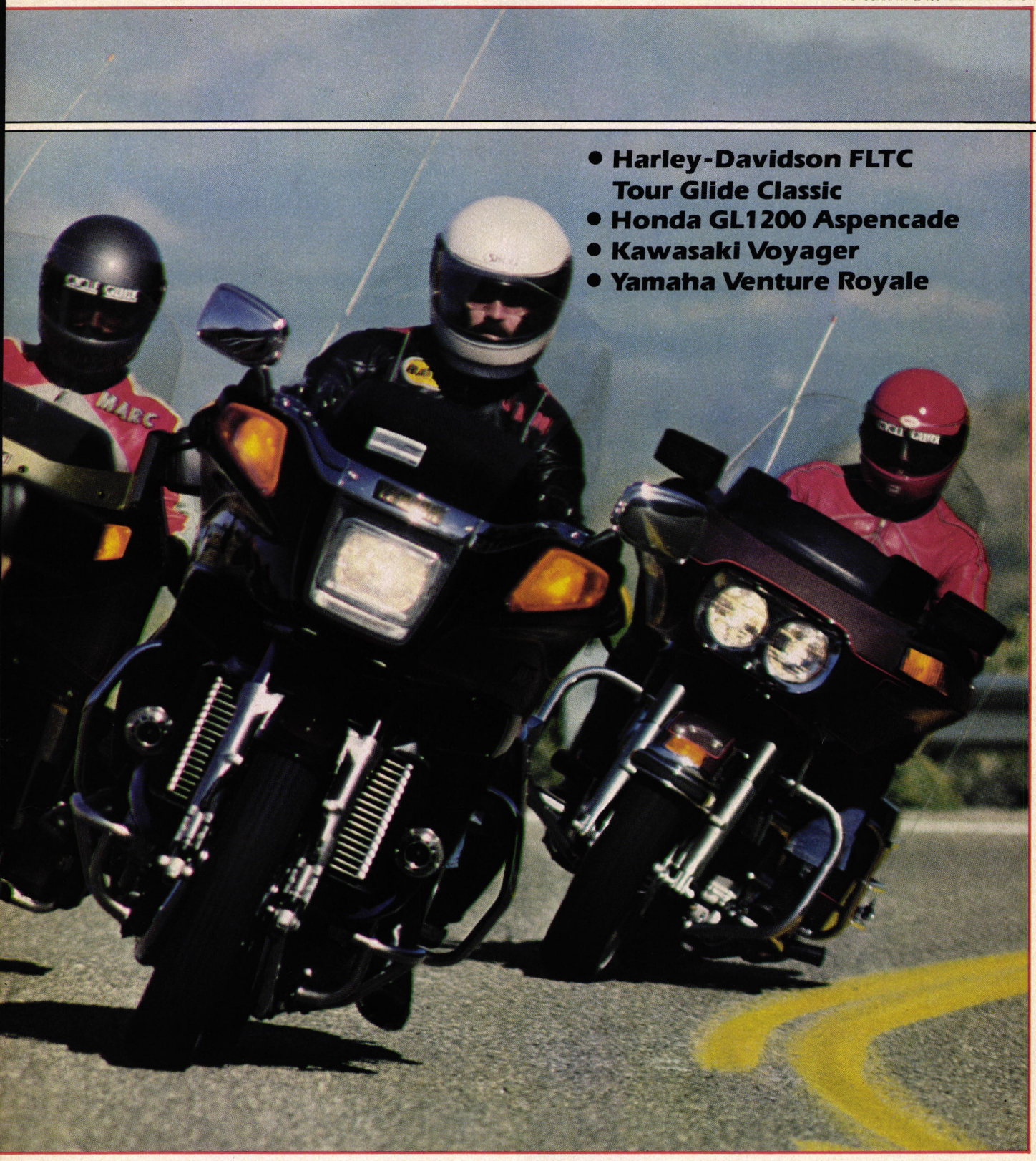
That is, of course, precisely what a turn-key touring bike (short-speak for one that rolls off the assembly line fully equipped and ready to hit that long, lonesome highway) is supposed to do: to arouse the latent wanderlust in all of us. After all, there's no better way to step up enthusiasm for two-wheel travel than to build motorcycles that compel you to go somewhere instead of ones that simply serve your need to get there. And never before has there been a collection of motorcycles more likely to inspire expedition-length rides than this year's crop of turn-key tourers. It's a truly impressive quartet of Interstate-class luxury liners comprised of: Harley-Davidson's FLT Classic, already a respected touring rig now powered by that company's new-and-improved V² Evolution engine; Honda's all-new GL1200 Aspencade, a completely redesigned version of the perennial King of the Superslab; Kawasaki's 1300cc Voyager, the biggest, most elaborately outfitted production motorcycle in history; and Yamaha's 1200cc Venture Royale, designed from the get-go to be the fastest and sportiest turn-key touring bike on the road.

Unquestionably, these four models elevate the state of the touring art to new highs in virtually every respect—power, smoothness, creature comforts, carrying capacity and, last but certainly not least, entertainment systems. But since all of these bikes are either entirely new or have been significantly improved for '84 (the Kawasaki Voyager was introduced late last year but was termed an "early release" 1984 model, thus it is unchanged this year), all previously held notions about the superiority or inferiority of the various touring bikes are now obsolete. In other words, the old answers don't apply because the questions are new; consequently, riders in the market for new touring iron are faced with a whole new set of values affecting their purchasing decisions.

In the end, though, there's only one question that really matters: For rides measured in days rather than in mere miles, which of these new long-haul motorcycles is *the* best, the new master of the open road?

We didn't have the answer on the tips of our tongues, but we knew how to *get* it: with a long-distance comparison, an over-the-road shootout, if you'll pardon the pun, between the big guns of turn-key touring. So we gathered together all four of the contenders, packed each one full of the stuff that tours are made

PHOTOGRAPHY © 1984 DAVID DEWHURST



- **Harley-Davidson FLTC Tour Glide Classic**
- **Honda GL1200 Aspencade**
- **Kawasaki Voyager**
- **Yamaha Venture Royale**

with, and headed out on a route that would begin and end at our offices just outside of Los Angeles and take us as far east as El Paso, Texas. When it was all over, after our 2000-mile-long trek had come to an end, one machine had indeed proven to stand above the rest, to be the new King of Turn-key Touring.

Which one? Well, you'll find out in a few minutes. But first we want to introduce the four combatants and tell you a little something about how each is built and the ways in which it differs from its predecessors. And we also want to caution you that, as a result of simply reading about these spellbinding motorcycles, you're liable to begin behaving like the archetypal moto-no-mad—you know, doing things like collecting every roadmap in existence, juggling your vacation dates and conjuring the flimsiest of excuses ("I hear you can get a *dynamite* cup of coffee in Saskatoon") to justify a lengthy ride.

So consider yourself warned. And if anything like that happens to you . . . hey, don't blame us.

It's just the gypsy in your soul.

Continued

Harley-Davidson FLTC Tour Glide Classic

Solving the Harley Dilemma: How to make functional change while keeping up appearances.

• Compared with the Japanese manufacturers, Harley-Davidson faces more limitations in the number and extent of updates it can incorporate into existing models. First, H-D simply can't afford to make wholesale changes, and second, buyer resistance to features that seem un-Harley-like keeps H-D from straying too far from its own tradition.

That explains why the 1984 FLTC Tour Glide Classic is very close to the '83 version in appearance. Certainly, changes have been made, but H-D was careful not to offend the traditionalists; most of the changes are hidden underneath the bike's familiar styling.

The V² engine, for instance, an upgraded version of last year's Shovelhead motor, retains the unmistakable look of H-D's Big Twin. Internally, though, the engine has been extensively re-engineered, with most of the effort put into the top end. Inside the cases, for example, little has changed except for stronger connecting rods and a new cam with less duration, less overlap and more valve lift than the Shovelhead cam.

On top of the cases, however, are new, die-cast aluminum cylinders with cast-in iron liners, which help make the Evolution engine a claimed 12 pounds lighter than the iron-barrel Shovelhead. And for longer service life, the Big Twin uses "conical-oval" pistons, which Harley claims promote even expansion, and permit tight clearances for good heat-dissipation.

New sand-cast aluminum heads with a narrower included valve angle (58 degrees compared with the Shovelhead's 78 degree angle) sit atop the V²'s aluminum cylinders. The narrower angle produces a shallower combustion chamber than the Shovelhead's, allowing the use of flat-top pistons. As a result of the new engine's more compact chamber dimensions, less heat—and, consequently, power—is lost to the surrounding metal. In addition, the new combustion-chamber design and a central sparkplug location promote quicker combustion, which let Harley's engineers use an 8.5:1 compression ratio in place of the Shovelhead's 7.4:1 ratio.

In redesigning the Big Twin's top end, Harley fitted smaller valves to match the V² motor's smaller ports. The size reduction increases the velocity of the incoming charge, resulting in improved cylinder filling, and more low-rpm torque than the Shovelhead's bigger port/valve arrangement.

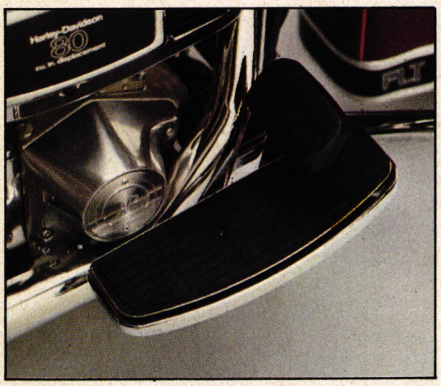
All of Harley's V² engines have those features, along with new hydraulic lifters with larger-diameter rollers and hollow, one-piece pushrods, as well as internal routing of oil to the top end (rather than through external oil lines) and the two-stage, vacuum-controlled V-Fire III ignition. What the FLTC's Evolution engine (and the FLHTC's) has that the others don't is approximately four more horsepower, thanks to use of the old-style airbox and a different exhaust system that Harley claims allows the engine to breathe better.

Like the other five-speed V² motors, the FLTC's engine is rubber-mounted in its frame to help control vibration. The FLTC's frame, though, introduced in 1980, is Harley's first computer-designed frame for the reworked Big Twin. And for '84, H-D relocated the rear shocks' top mounts, lowering the rear of the bike one-half inch to reduce the seat height. That maneuver also resulted in one degree more steering head angle, more trail and less ground clearance than on the '83 FLT. Suspension travel remains unchanged, as do the spring and damping rates.

In front, the FLTC retains its unusual design that uses triple clamps that angle the fork tubes less steeply than the steering head, and positions them behind the steering head. Such an arrangement provides low steering-effort and a strong self-aligning action for straight-line stability. And although the front end's spring and damping rates are the same as the '83's, Harley did give the fork air-assist and an anti-dive system. The air-assist feature uses the combined air volumes of the fork and the engine guard; an air hose links the two. When either the

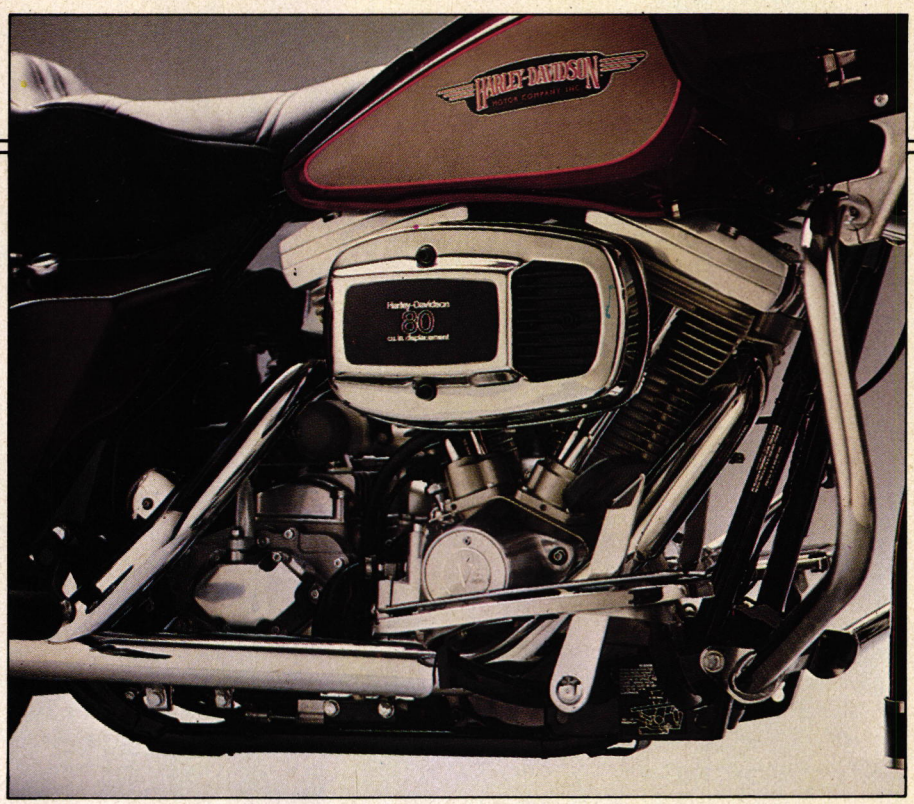
Turnsignal incorporates saddlebag lock

It takes two hands or better to open.



Brake pedal resembles a '65 Dodge pickup's

But floorboards are pure H-D.



FLTC's V² Evolution engine has a horsepower advantage over FX-series V² motors

Courtesy of freer-breathing exhaust pipes and Ham Can airbox.

front or rear brake is applied, however, the brake-light switch actuates a solenoid that seals off the engine guard from the rest of the system. Then, as the fork compresses, the pressure inside the tubes rises more rapidly than if both volumes were employed, and so provides an anti-dive effect. The FLTC's front end got an improved dual-disc front brake for '84, too, the same as that used on Harley's XR1000. The discs are larger in diameter than the '83 FLT's, and along with the XR-style calipers, provide a claimed reduction in lever effort.

That takes care of the fundamental differences between the FLT and the FLTC. But H-D made some minor changes, as well, such as switching from Goodyear to Dunlop tires, which are lighter and contribute to a claimed 20-pound weight loss. Plus, the Tour-Pak trunk and backrest were moved back 1¼ inches for more passenger room.

Overall, then, Harley-Davidson has performed a thorough massage on its top-of-the-line tourer. Yet, despite the improvements, the FLTC doesn't look significantly different from the '83 FLT. But that was the point, really; H-D improved the FLTC functionally, yet left the bike's appearance intact. And to most Harley enthusiasts, that's just the way things should be.

—*Charles Everitt*

Massive Tour-Pak trunk dominates the Tour Glide Classic's rear view

And it's been repositioned for increased passenger room.

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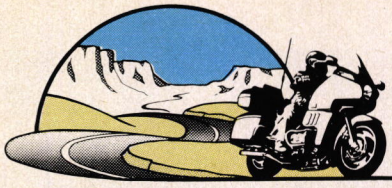


Honda GL1200 Aspencade

A reformed institution.

• To Honda, staying on top of the touring scene meant getting radical, while at the same time appearing not to change. After all, altering an institution like the Honda Gold Wing is risky, and completely redesigning it borders on an invitation to disaster. But that's exactly what Honda did when designing the GL1200.

GL devotees needn't abandon ship yet, though, because recognizing the new machine as a Gold Wing is easy; it still has all the distinguishing marks of the breed. Most recognizable of all is the fact that the engine still is a horizontally opposed four with belt-driven overhead cams. Features introduced last year are still present, too, like the Torque Reactive Anti-dive Control (TRAC) and the unified braking system, although the proportioning valve that activates both front and rear brakes when the foot pedal is pressed now directs a greater percentage of the hydraulic pressure to the rear brake than did last year's.

Make no mistake, though; as conservative as Honda's remake of the GL might appear, the Gold Wing is a radically new machine with new performance goals. In fact, the engine shares only two parts with past year's motor—the fuel and oil pumps. One of the new aims was to increase low-rpm output, and to that end the stroke was increased 4.6mm and the bore increased 0.5mm, resulting in an 1182cc displacement. The cams have more lift, duration and overlap than did the '83 GL's, and intake valves now are smaller so the fuel charge enters the combustion chamber at a higher velocity.

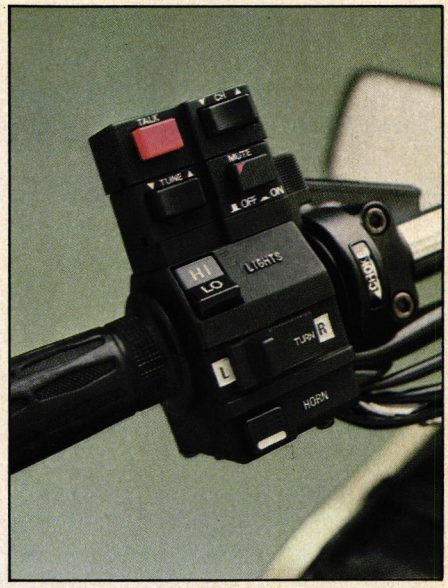
Another of Honda's goals was to reduce the amount of maintenance required. And so, the new Aspencade has a hydraulic valve-adjuster system similar to that used on the VT750 Shadow. The system employs engine oil pressure to move eccentric rocker-arm pivots to maintain zero freeplay between the rockers and the valve stems. Greater reliability also was the rationale behind the new clutch with its nine friction plates ('83's had eight) and hydraulic actuation. And the new GL has a rather elaborate drive mechanism for the AC generator. Last year's alternator was driven by a shaft with a rubber damper mechanism to absorb sudden torque loads, but that damper produced a slight shudder at low rpm. Now the generator has a straight drive until the engine reaches 3000 rpm,

The Honda Gold Wing flies again, and now has a new coat of feathers

Virtually all of the parts are reshaped, but they sum up to a familiar whole.

The new Aspencade's fairing-mounted controls and instruments are greatly simplified

But you'll never know quite where the engine's redline is until you exceed it.



Audio controls are a thumbs-length away

To keep music and eyes on the road.

at which point a ball-ramp mechanism disconnects the direct drive and leaves a spring-damped shaft to drive the generator. And that generator now has an output of 360 watts, as opposed to last year's 300 watts. The ignition also is new, and has an electronic/vacuum advance that operates only when the bike is in fourth or fifth gear. And a change in the primary drive ratio gave the Aspencade taller overall (lower numerical) gearing.

New performance goals were set for the chassis as well. The bike now has a 16-inch front rim and a 15-incher in the rear with wider tires mounted at both ends. These changes were made to lower the center of gravity, quicken steering and improve traction. The wider tires prompted a 5mm wider swingarm. The change in wheel diameter by itself would have reduced the GL's ground clearance, so Honda countered by tilting the engine upward 3 degrees about the swingarm pivot.

Other chassis changes were prompted by input from GL owners. A common suggestion was to make the GL better balanced for riding two-up. So Honda shifted the bike's weight bias forward by moving the engine 60mm to the front and lengthening the swingarm. Honda also increased the bike's Gross Vehicle Weight Rating through a series of changes ranging from increasing the diameters of the swingarm and fork stanchion tubes to stiffening both the front and rear suspension. Passenger comfort was given a high priority, too, and that's why the rear portion of the seat and backrest are wider this year. And for the same reason, the passenger also now gets armrests and footboards.

Other changes also enhance the Aspencade's long-haul capabilities. The carrying capacities of the saddlebags and the travel trunk were increased, and the luggage's troublesome double-lip lid seals were replaced with a clever 0-ring, tongue-and-groove design. The glove box in the GL's dummy fuel tank was made larger when the air compressor was relocated to the right of the fairing this year. That compressor, which comes only on the Aspencade model, is used to adjust the suspension, and can only be operated when the ignition key is on and the bike isn't moving. This year the air-suspension system includes an outlet valve and air hose that can be used for inflating anything from tires to beach balls. The outlet only works when the key is in Park position.

Fixed saddlebags have increased capacity

In both volume and weight rating.

Like last year, the dash has an air-pressure gauge for the suspension, and that gauge doubles as a temperature readout when the bike is moving. The entire instrument cluster is mounted in the fairing this year, and the tachometer is now digital only, lacking any analog display. Below this year's LCD tach readout is a warning light that flashes red when 6500 rpm is exceeded. When revs climb past the actual engine redline of 7500 rpm, the bar glows continuously.

When all the changes—small and large—are totaled, it might seem that not much is left of the original GL. But despite a top-to-bottom revamping, there's enough of the original design to assure that the end result is still a Gold Wing.

—Ron Lawson

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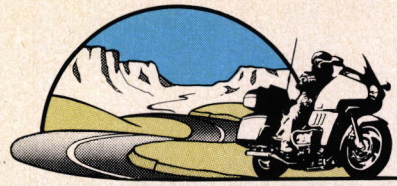
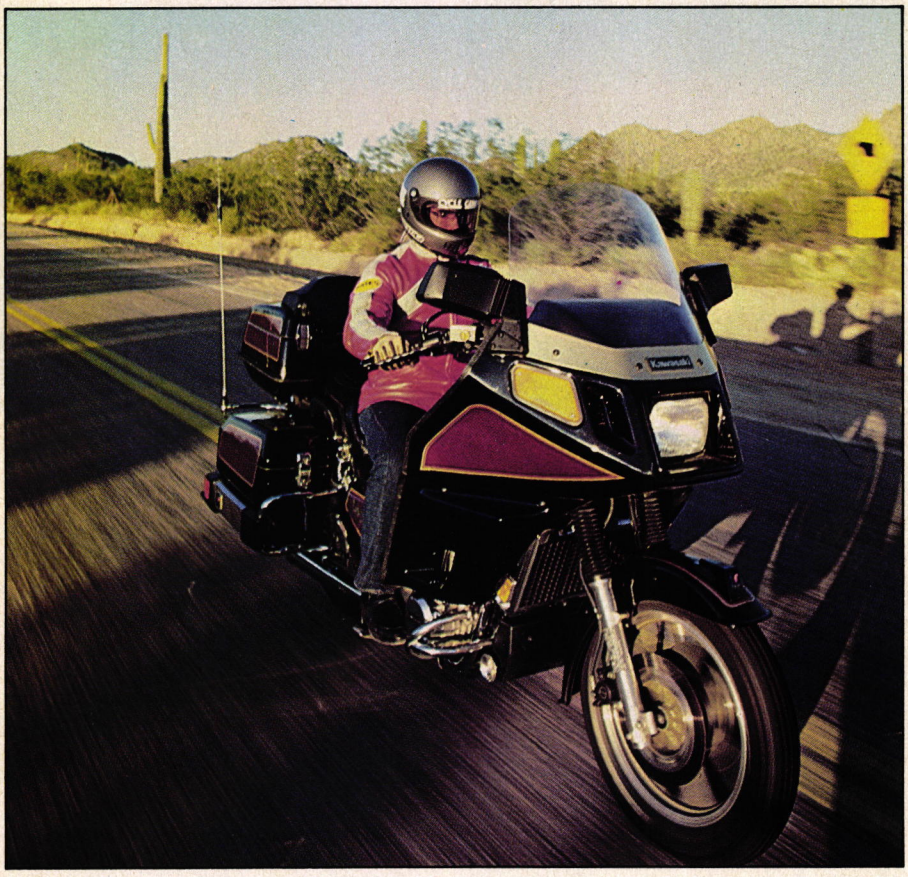


Kawasaki Voyager

Touring's all-time king of cubic stuff.



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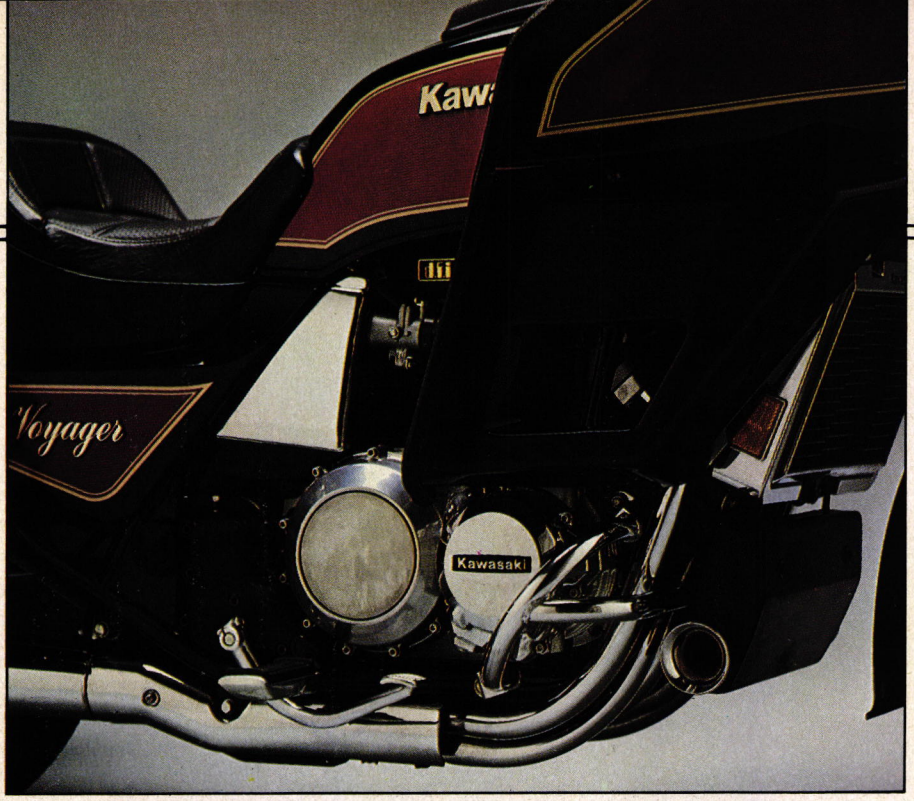
• Kawasaki makes no bones about it: The role model for the Voyager was Honda's Aspencade, the most successful turn-key touring machine ever built. But the goal was not just to match that widely acclaimed Honda point-for-point, rather to *surpass* it in every conceivable way—in power, handling, comfort, luxury, payload, even in sheer size and the number of gadgets included as standard equipment.

It's only fitting, then, that the propulsion for such a two-wheeled superlative would be provided by a liquid-cooled, 1286cc, inline six-cylinder powerplant that is—as it has been since Kawasaki introduced it back in 1979—the biggest, heaviest, most complicated motorcycle engine ever to come out of Japan. But despite its utter complexity, this DOHC, 12-valve motor (which houses a record number of gears, shafts, chains and sprockets, as well as *two* alternators, one on each end of the plain-bearing crankshaft) has proven smooth, quiet, exceptionally reliable and capable of a wide powerband—all factors that encouraged its use for this long-distance application.

There are, however, several differences between the engine in this motorcycle (which for '84 is identical to the original Voyager sold late last year as an "early release" 1984 model) and previous Kawasaki Sixes. One is the use of Kawasaki's tried-and-proven Digital Fuel Injection (DFI) system in place of the three two-barrel CV carbs used previously. This particular DFI also incorporates an innovative "cruise" mode (selected by the rider with a push of a button on the dash) that leans out the mixture during fifth-gear cruising, resulting in slightly better fuel mileage. In addition, new flat-crown pistons net the same compression ratio (9.3:1) as the old domed type but promote quicker burning of the mixture, allowing the Six to digest just about any grade of pump gas without detonating itself into oblivion. Kawasaki also juggled some driveline ratios to make the first three gears lower (for stronger acceleration of the Voyager's considerable mass) and the top two gears taller (for better fuel mileage). And, to make the engine a bit narrower in the footpeg region, two plates were deleted from the clutch to allow for a slimmer right-side engine cover.

That clutch cover, however, is just about the only place where the word "slim" can be used to describe the Voyager's engine or, for that matter, its running gear, as well. Most of the components in the chassis are quite conventional in both design and technology, but everything is so huge, so far out of normal proportions, that a rider on a Voyager looks like a Lilliputian out for a spin on Gulliver's motorcycle. And a trip to the scales verifies that the Voyager's apparent immensity is no illusion, for the bike weighs a staggering 882 pounds. And that doesn't include anything that goes into the 7.1-gallon gas tank, onto the roomy, double-bucket seat, or into the voluminous, quick-detachable saddlebags and tour trunk. There also are numerous other compartments (one in the fairing, another beneath the trunk and one in the lid of each saddlebag) for smaller items.

Much of the Voyager's extraordinary avoirdupois, however, is due to its full load of factory-installed touring goodies. The Clarion-built AM/FM/cassette system (which is standard; a CB radio and intercom system are the only options) is nothing out of the ordinary for a turn-key tour bike, and neither is the on-board compressor that lets you regulate suspension air pressure with the nudge of a button. But beyond that, the Kawasaki's list of features reads like no other. It includes dual air-horns powered by their own electric compressor; a passenger backrest on the tour trunk adjustable to either of two positions (by moving the trunk); massive handlebars that adjust three ways (for height; for distance from the rider; and



PHOTOGRAPHY © 1984 VIC HUBER

The wide, long fairing hides most of the significant parts of the 1286cc inline-six

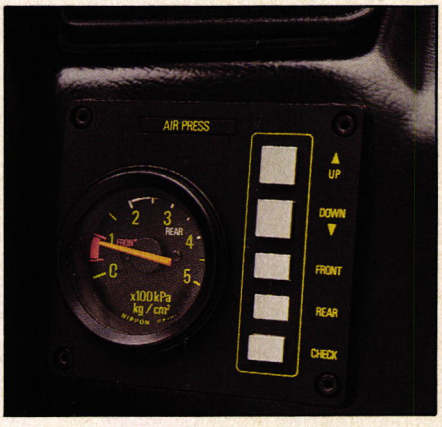
But nothing can mask the engine's light-flywheeled, go/no-go personality.

Roomy luggage helps you get away from it all

By letting you take it all with you.

On-board computer monitors trip information

Think of it as a Kawaseiko.



Air-suspension controls are plain, simple

A lone dial gauge amidst a sea of LCDs.

Cockpit includes the biggest, most diverse array of instruments ever found on two wheels

As well as some of the hardest to read.

for grip-to-wrist angularity); a two-stage centerstand that even small riders can easily deploy; and case guards and saddlebag protectors that prevent the bike from rolling onto its side if it tips over.

You can't appreciate that anti-roll feature until your Voyager falls over, but you can enjoy the on-board trip computer on every ride. The LCD digital unit atop the gas tank monitors 10 different bits of travel information, such as average speed, average/current fuel mileage and amount of fuel consumed, to name a few examples. And that's just the tip of a solid-state iceberg as far as the Voyager's instrumentation is concerned. The large dash panel built into the wide fairing is a montage of different styles of LCD readouts ranging from digits only (speedometer, tripmeter, radio frequency, time of day) to others that spell out messages ("cruise" for DFI mode, "O/D" for "overdrive," which is fifth gear). The fuel level, coolant temperature, battery voltage and bar-graph tachometer all have their values displayed in little block-type LCD segments. And when you combine all of that with flashing red LCDs for the monitoring system, plus an LCD for the electronic compass that has an adjustable sensor mounted on the front fender, you've got a dashboard that looks like it belongs on K.I.T.T., Knight Rider's indestructible black Firebird. All that's missing are the talking computer and the red light scanning across the front.

But, then, there's always *next* year's Voyager. —*Paul Dean*

Continued

Yamaha Venture Royale

The vee-four is as before.

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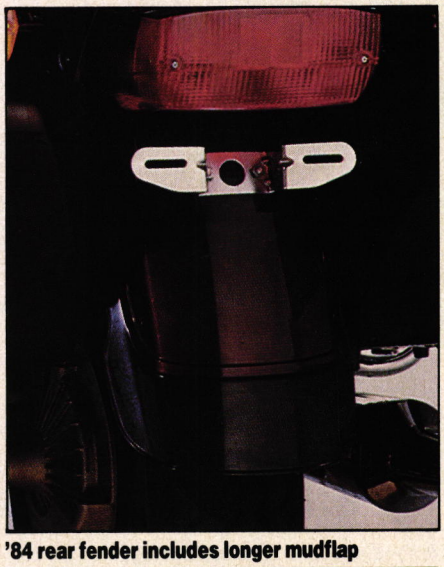
• The introduction of Yamaha's Venture and Venture Royale last year sent high-performance shock waves jolting though the normally staid touring community. At the epicenter of those tremors was the engine that was common to both bikes, a 1198cc, shaft-drive vee-four. And despite the fact that the Royale—and its engine—are largely unchanged for 1984, the shock waves continue.

Yamaha wanted to differentiate its then-new tourer from the rest of the turn-key bikes, and chose engine performance as the key. And so, the powerplant was designed to incorporate a list of high-performance features: liquid-cooling, 16 valves, double-overhead cams, hydraulic clutch actuation and a bank of four 34mm CV Mikunis tucked into the 70-degree spread between its fore and aft cylinders. The engine employs no jackshafts before or after its five-speed transmission; straight-cut primary gears drive the gearbox mainshaft, and the countershaft powers the final drive directly.

The engine breaks no new ground technologically, and little about it is unique save for its 180-degree, plain-bearing crankshaft; all other production vee-four motorcycle engines use 360-degree cranks. Non-revolutionary or not, though, Yamaha claims 90 horsepower for the 7500-rpm-redline engine, enough to propel the Royale to 120-mph-plus top speeds—and to make it the performance king of the full-dressers. And mindful that the Royale would be judged on its long-haul capability as well as its engine performance, the engineers included a single, gear-driven counterbalancer to quell engine vibrations.

An eye toward performance also is evident in the Royale's running gear. The brake system uses double discs in the front and a single disc in the rear, interconnected so that the left front and the rear calipers are applied with brake pedal pressure; the brake lever actuates the right-front caliper only. The fork is air-assisted, has an aluminum brace integral with the front fender and includes a brake-actuated hydraulic anti-dive unit in each slider leg.

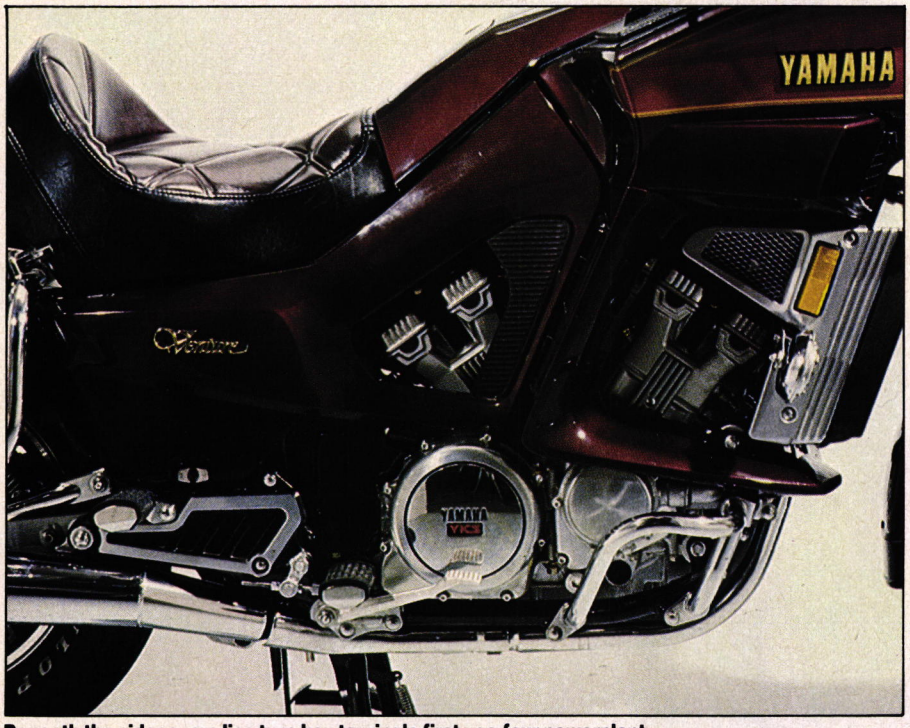


'84 rear fender includes longer mudflap

So the brightwork stays that way.

Suspension in the rear is a Monocross system similar to that used on YZ motocrossers. The Yamaha-built, air-spring shock, a deCarbon-type with four needle-valve-controlled rebound-damping settings, is mounted directly to the frame at the top and to the swingarm through a two-piece linkage system at the bottom, producing rising rates of springing and damping. Damping adjustments can be made without tools by using the adjuster mounted below the left sidecover. Equally easy to adjust is the Royale's Computer Leveling Air Suspension System (CLASS), the controls for which are built into the right side of the fairing. Air pressure for both the fork and shock can be adjusted manually in one-pound increments or to preset Low, Medium and High settings via an air compressor located under the travel trunk.

Although the Royale is unchanged in general specification, Yamaha did alter a number of minor items. For instance, even though the '84 model uses the same oval-venturi downdraft carbs as the '83, numerous jetting changes were made to



Beneath the sidecovers lies turn-key touring's first vee-four powerplant

Making Yamaha's Venture Royale the undisputed roll-on champion of touring.

Yamaha air-suspension system still the best

And still the CLASSiest.

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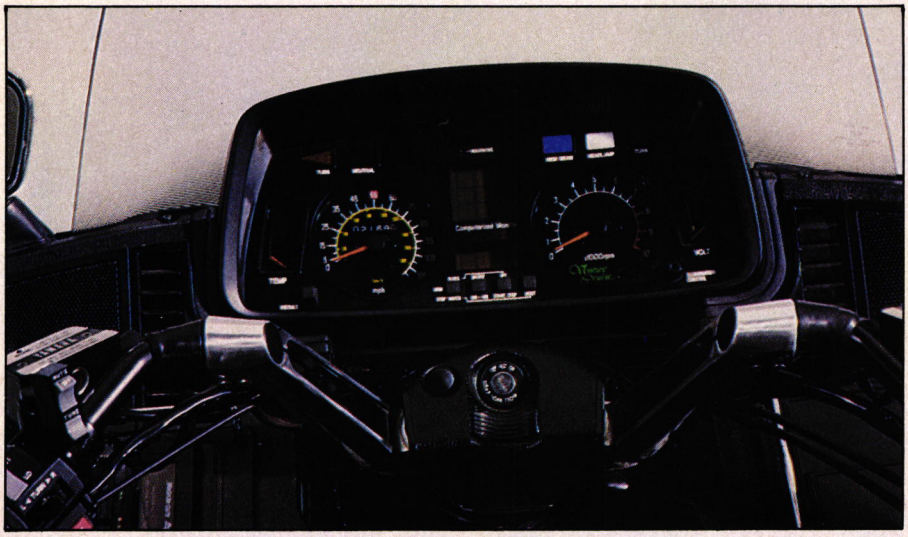
improve starting and to increase fuel economy. And the ignition curve was altered so the ignition would go to full advance 2500 rpm sooner than last year's, also for reasons of fuel mileage; Yamaha claims a 15 percent mileage gain at speeds from 50-to-70 mph as a result. Also, suspension damping was reduced slightly at both ends, and the fork uses marginally longer springs and less fork oil. Shock piston diameter was increased from 30mm to 36mm and the damping adjuster was strengthened to increase the shock's service life. The front rim-width was increased from 2.15 inches to 2.5 inches, to increase stability at speed. And to provide better wind-protection, the windscreen was made 50mm taller. The Royale's instrument panel also was revised, and now includes an LCD stopwatch, a digital gear indicator and an illumination control. Smoked plastic covers the instruments this year to reduce glare.



Redesigned instrument cluster has two new readouts and illumination control

And smoked plastic so the new look can be seen.

Those small changes might go all but unnoticed, but one other addition for 1984 is bound to arouse not only interest but emulation on future big-rigs: This year's Venture Royale is the first production motorcycle to arrive equipped with an electronic cruise control. The unit can be set with a flick of the switch (located in the switch cluster on the right handlebar) to keep the bike at a steady speed. The control shuts off when either brake is applied, when the switch is turned off or when the throttle is overridden. The control is an option on the lower-price, non-Royale version of the Venture.

The addition of a cruise control will, no doubt, enhance the Royale's long-haul attractiveness, but it won't change the bike's main attraction one whit. Yamaha's Venture Royale was—and still remains—the powerhouse of American-style touring. *—Larry Works*

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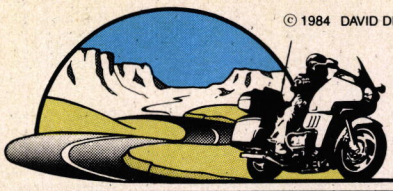

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BY PAUL DEAN

By the time our excursion across The Great Southwest came to an end, we had made two all-important decisions concerning these four motorcycles: We had determined which one is the best turn-key touring bike of all; and we had concluded that for any sort of long rides on the Superslab, we'd take one of these four—*any* one—before choosing some other motorcycle. Obviously, some bikes in this quartet are better than others, but as a group, they *all* are the best at what they were designed to do, which is to gobble up huge expanses of open road more easily and comfortably than anything else that rides on two wheels.

Each turn-key machine gets the job done in its own particular way, however, largely because each uses an entirely different engine configuration than the others. And deciding which engine provides the best performance characteristics depends on how you order your touring priorities. If flat-out acceleration, for instance, is high on your list, you'll want to know that the vee-four Yamaha, as advertised, runs away and hides from the other three. The flat-four Honda narrowly outdrags the inline-six Kawasaki for second place, and, to no one's surprise, the vee-twin Harley-Davidson maintains a firm grasp on last place in all forms of zero-to-anything acceleration.

But, while WFO performance can, on occasion, be useful while on tour, a more practical, meaningful yardstick is roll-on acceleration from about 50 mph in top gear. And in this category, a rough measure of how well a motorcycle passes slower traffic without any downshifting, the Yamaha once again wins going away. The Kawasaki does the second-fastest roll-ons, however, pulling the Harley by a bikelength or two up to around 80 or 85 mph. And the Honda, primarily due to its exceptionally tall fifth gear, finishes last in the roll-on derby.

On the other hand, the Aspencade's reluctance to accelerate quickly in high gear is more of an asset than a liability in touring's most common situation: trying to maintain a relatively constant speed while also trying to see the sights. And in that respect, the Honda is second only to the Harley. The FLT's low-revving, heavy-flywheeled vee-twin just keeps

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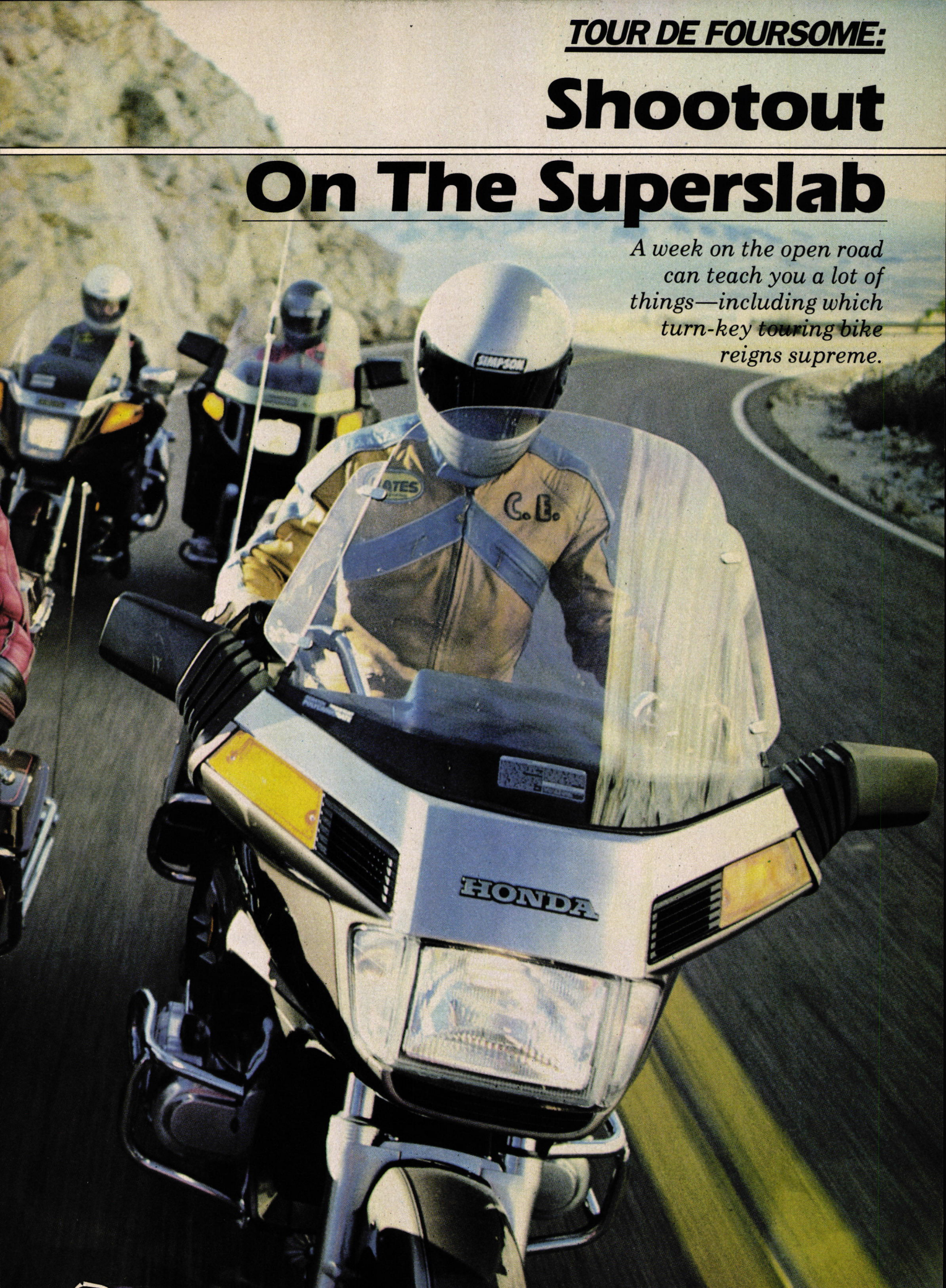
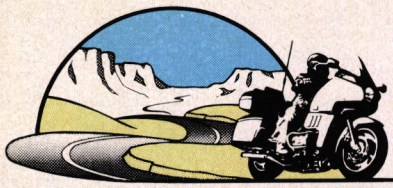
TOUR DE FOURSOME:

Shootout On The Superslab

A week on the open road can teach you a lot of things—including which turn-key touring bike reigns supreme.

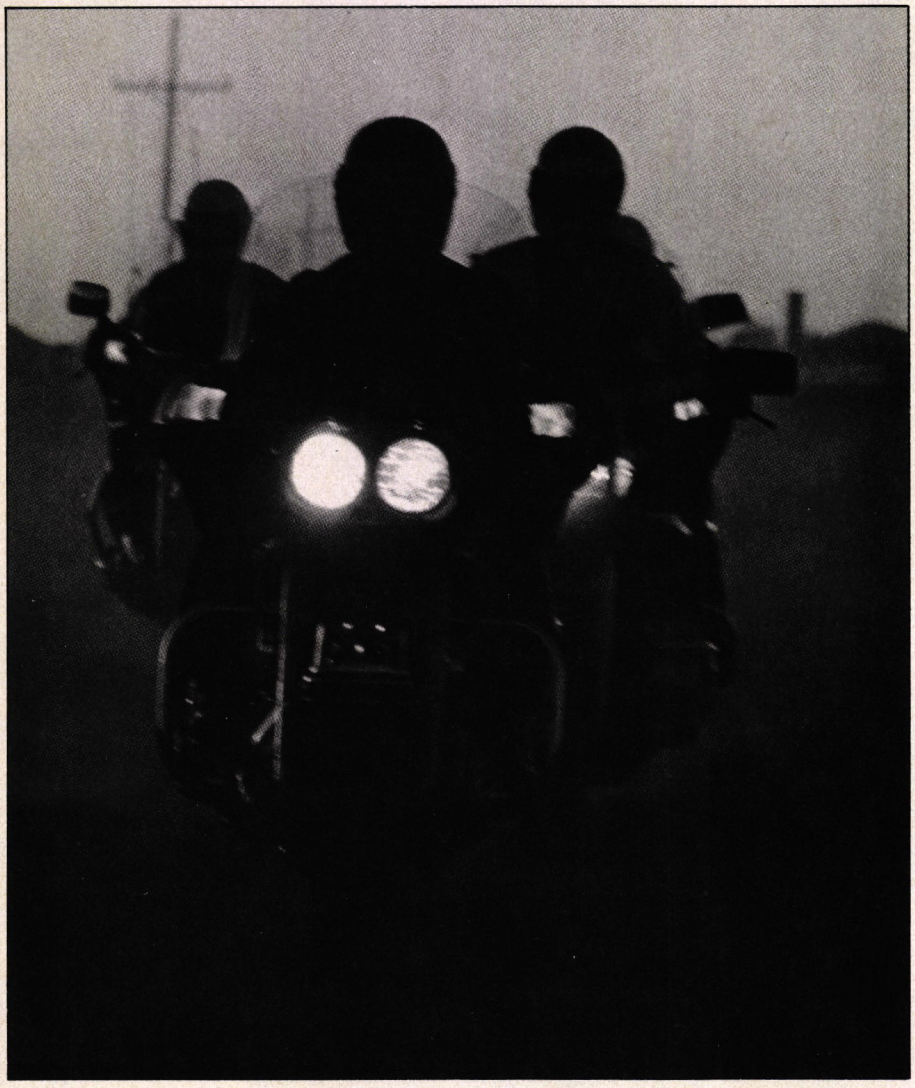




lumbering along, its rpm more or less unaffected by anything other than a steep grade or a substantial change in throttle setting. The Honda requires a little more attention to the throttle than the FLT does, and the Yamaha a bit more yet, but neither to an annoying degree. Not so the Kawasaki, which is unusually light-flywheeled, comparatively high-strung and ready, seemingly, to either lunge ahead or lag behind if the throttle isn't held perfectly motionless.

What's more, the Voyager's engine also gives off the most bothersome noises and buzzes. The racy exhaust note is fun for a while, but its high pitch always makes the big Six sound like it's revving much faster than it actually is; and a full day of that, coupled with the Voyager's incessant gear-whine and a trace of high-frequency/low-amplitude vibration through the grips and pegs, can make you tired before your time. Truthfully, the Harley, not the Kawasaki, has the most raucous engine, but its low, booming exhaust note is pleasant, somehow almost soothing, while the rubber motor-mounts isolate most vibrations. And any vibes that do get through to the rider are of such low frequency that they usually aren't debilitating.

Still, the most civilized engine of the four belongs to the Honda, which cruises so smoothly and silently that we occasionally were prompted to blip the throttle just to insure that the motor hadn't fallen out. The Yamaha's counterbalanced vee-four, despite its spectacular performance, managed a respectable second place in the smooth/quiet category.



Understanding how the engines in these turn-key machines behave on the open road gives you a strong indication of how they *handle* under those same circumstances. The Harley, for example, is supremely stable in a straight line, since it is just as reluctant to change direction of its own volition as it is to change rpm on its own. The FLT is virtually unaffected by sidewinds, longitudinal ruts and camber changes; it just keeps going straight as though locked-in on some homing signal. The Honda is exceptionally stable, too, but it can't match the Harley for Gibraltar-like steadiness, so it often is diverted off course ever so slightly by paving irregularities or gusts of wind. Those same conditions bother the Yamaha even more—although still not to a disturbing degree—and have the worst effect on the Voyager. Despite its sheer mass, the Kawasaki gets blown around quite a bit by the wind, and longitudinal grooves and paving transitions make it twitch and move off course more easily than a half-ton of motorcycle ought to.

It could be, however, that the Voyager's straight-line uncertainty is an undesirable side-effect resulting from the particular black magic that Kawasaki has used to make this huge motorcycle so remarkably maneuverable at speed. Down at a walking pace, the bike feels every bit as big and cumbersome as it actually is; but once out of the low-speed zone, the Voyager turns and changes direction like something weighing considerably less. It can even slither along a twisty road at a respectably brisk clip, so long as you remember that your cornering moves need to be more gradual and fluid than when you're on one of the other turn-key machines.

Not surprisingly, the Yamaha is the premier backroad performer, but only through having the hottest engine and the most liberal cornering clearance. The Venture Royale is not lighter than the second-best handler, the Honda, nor does it have a demonstrably better chassis. The Aspencade weighs only eight pounds

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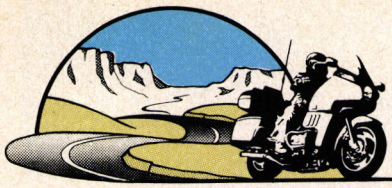

less than the Royale, but its lower center of gravity and 16-inch front wheel help it to *feel* noticeably lighter, smaller and less top-heavy than the Yamaha, and to steer more responsively, as well. In fact, all that prevents the Honda from outhandling the Yamaha in virtually every way is that the GL can't be leaned over as far without bashing into the pavement.

Don't underestimate the Harley as a twisty-road funbike, either, for although it has the least cornering clearance of the four, it still bends around the turns surprisingly well. If you get *real* aggressive, though, you have to apply considerable pressure on the grips when turning, and on the front brake lever when slowing. None of our testers griped about the FLT's rear brake, though, nor did they find fault with the braking behavior of any of the other turn-key bikes. The integrated braking systems on the Honda and Yamaha worked so unobtrusively that we usually were unaware of their presence; and the anti-dives on the FLT, Aspencade and Venture Royale (the Voyager has none) all helped reduce front-end dive during hard braking.

Anyway, such backroad antics are out of character for these cruise ships of the Interstate seas. These are bikes on which properties such as ride-quality and control placement are far more important than an ability to turn fast-time on Racer Road. And in a broad category labeled "comfort," all four turn-key tour bikes are extremely competent and not altogether dissimilar. The Honda and the Kawasaki offer the smoothest, plushest overall rides, with the Aspencade earning extra points for having marginally better suspension compliance over small, abrupt bumps and paving patches. The Yamaha also rides quite nicely, but it seems a bit more tautly sprung and damped than either the Honda or Kawasaki. The FLT definitely is the stiffest of the group and has the most stiction in the front fork; but even at that, the ride on the Harley could be termed "harsh" only on relatively rough pavement.

Of course, some of the credit for the excellent ride offered by all these bikes must go to their respective seats. There isn't a *bad* saddle in the lot, as evidenced by the fact that each of us picked a different one as his favorite. There aren't any seriously wonky ergonomics to contend with elsewhere, either. The Yamaha's footpegs are mounted further rearward than normal for a touring bike—undoubtedly in keeping with the Venture's bias toward the sport end of the touring spectrum—but they cause no rider discomfort. And the FLT, in typical H-D fashion, uses footboards instead of footpegs, and they position the rider's feet further *forward* than normal. The left footboard also allows your foot to rest in only one place, since the heel-and-toe shift lever prevents any fore-and-aft movement. Both the Honda and the Kawasaki, however, are completely straightforward and touring-typical, with no ergonomic quirks that could intrude on your comfort.

Nor will a day of poking a hole in the wind cause any discomfort, since all four bikes are fitted with extraordinarily effective fairings. The Kawasaki's high, wide fairing offers the most protection, permitting a slight draft around the ankles but otherwise surrounding the rider with a pocket of still air and causing no buffeting around the helmet. The Honda gives the second-best protection from the elements, with just a touch of turbulence evident around helmet-level; and the Yamaha ranks third, allowing no discernible buffeting but also affording less overall protection than all but the half-faired Harley-Davidson. Nevertheless, that half-fairing on the FLT works with uncanny efficiency, for it causes no buffeting, shields the torso at least as well as the full fairings on the other bikes, and offers the best hand-protection of all.

Too bad we can't heap the same across-the-board praise on the luggage worn by these travelbikes. The Honda unquestionably has the best luggage system, for although the saddlebags and tour trunk are non-detachable, they offer the highest quality of fit-and-finish, the best latches, the most effective waterproofing system (a clever double-trough design), and the second-best liners. And if you include what you can stow in the two fairing compartments, the two pouches below the armrests on the trunk and the storage tray in the dummy gas tank, the Aspencade has more overall carrying capacity than any of the other bikes except for the Kawasaki. The Voyager can tote along about as much stuff as the Aspencade, but it has the second-best latches, the cheesiest liners and, for some unexplained reason, no carrying handles on the detachable bags. The Harley's system includes the highest-quality liners (that could use slightly larger zippered

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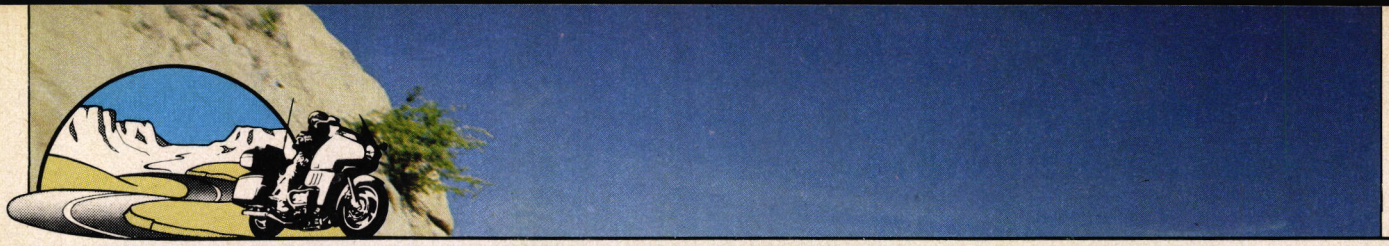

Harley-Davidson FLTC

Nits

- Air-cleaner housing fouls right leg.
- Dissimilarity of mirrors (wide-angle on right, flat-type on left) is confusing.
- Passenger-peg brackets catch rider's legs when paddling bike around.
- Hand controls and switches are bulky, awkward to use.
- Automotive-type brake pedal is awkward, difficult to modulate during hard stops.
- Tour-trunk lid hits passenger backrest when closing, tearing upholstery.
- Lack of centerstand makes tire changes/repairs difficult.
- Tachometer erratic.

Picks

- Four small compartments molded into trunk's interior are useful.
- Can remove ignition key and still turn ignition on and off, lock front fork.
- Engine guards offer several alternative footrests.
- Sidestand locks in place when extended; bike can't roll off.
- Trunk lid is hinged on side and can be opened without disturbing passenger.

Honda Aspencade

Nits

- No graphic display of engine rpm—tach uses digital readout only.
- Fuel gauge inaccurate, erratic.
- Mass of wires and cables running down left handlebar looks disorganized.

Picks

- Seat adjusts fore and aft to any one of three positions covering a 1-inch range.
- Handlebar-mounted radio-tuning control scans both up *and* down frequency range.
- World's best OEM motorcycle toolkit is standard on the Aspencade.
- On-board air-compressor includes an extra fitting and a six-foot-long hose to allow inflation of tires, air mattresses, etc.

Kawasaki Voyager

Nits

- Bar-graph tachometer does not clearly or logically display rpm.
- Tach redline not visible at night.
- Function labels on monitoring system's readout impossible to read at night.
- No way to shut off monitoring system's red flashing light after you become aware of condition (low fuel, low oil, etc.)
- Neutral light often comes on and engine sometimes starts when gearbox *not* in neutral.
- Digital speedometer extremely optimistic, and its speedo/odometer/tripmeter readings don't correspond to those of trip computer.
- Clock/radio-frequency hard to read because of glare on display window.
- Trip computer's highest possible reading for "fuel added" is 6.6 gallons; fuel tank's capacity is 7.1 gallons.
- Radio frequency is displayed only for 5 seconds; must punch button on fairing to display current frequency.
- Windshield material not perfectly clear, hindering night vision.
- Light-flywheeled engine stalls easily and unpredictably.
- Rear-wheel removal is extremely complicated, yet it's not even *mentioned* in owner's manual, nor are there sufficient tools included to do the job.

Picks

- Tour trunk is equipped with twin snap-in vanity cases.
- Dual air-horns are loud, easily heard in traffic.
- Electrically adjusted headlight can be reaimed with the touch of a button.
- Switch on left handlebar control pod allows rider to choose between self-canceling or manually canceled turnsignals.
- Handgrips are long, soft and comfortable.

Yamaha Venture Royale

Nits

- Saddlebags difficult to install in the dark.
- Fuel petcock is tiny, in poor location (just above right-side passenger footrest, requiring rider to remove hand from throttle to operate from the saddle).
- No "resume" function on cruise control.
- Clock displays time only when ignition is on.
- Huge plastic sidecovers are flimsy, cheapen bike's perceived value.
- Locking system for removable radio/tape deck is cheap, poorly thought-out.

Picks

- Footpegs adjustable fore and aft.
- Suspension air compressor can adjust pressure either automatically (to one of three preset levels) or manually.
- Brightness of instrument-panel lighting can be regulated with knob on dash panel.
- Radio-frequency scanning button above left handgrip also serves as convenient tape-direction selector when cassette deck is in use.

openings) in its fixed luggage, but the poorest-quality, most balky latches. Moreover, shock-absorber indentations inside the saddlebags intrude on interior space, and the right-side bag's need to wrap around the FLT's large battery removes about half its potential capacity.

Then there's the Yamaha's quick-detachable but highly impractical luggage. The system uses no lift-out liners whatsoever, so if you have to pop open the saddlebags (which split vertically) or the trunk (which splits horizontally but has more than half of its capacity in its *lid*) on the road, chances are that at least some of your belongings will spill out. And since the Royale has no auxiliary compartments or pouches in which to stow smaller, often-needed items, you *will* end up opening the luggage on the road. Additionally, the Yamaha barely has enough storage capacity to sustain a two-up tour of any length—an area, in fact, in which the Harley is even suspect.

The FLT also loses the gadget competition, simply because it was never in it in the first place. Harley believes that the enjoyment of touring is provided by the environment through which you ride, not by the one you carry along with you. Thus the closest thing to a gadget on the FLT is its screw-type friction lock on the throttle. And as unsophisticated as this "poor-man's cruise control" might be, it works beautifully with the FLT's set-it-and-forget-it engine.

By comparison, the Venture Royale's electronic cruise control is a lot more sophisticated than the H-D's friction lock, but performance-wise, it's not all that much more effective. It doesn't operate smoothly at all, and allows the Yamaha's speed to fluctuate by as much as five mph. This isn't a bother when you're on the road alone, but it can be quite aggravating when you're traveling in a group.

And if that caravan happens to include the other three turn-key tourers, you'll quickly notice that the Yamaha's sound system is put to shame, both in fidelity and ease of operation, by the Honda's (see "Moto-Fi," pg. 77). In all fairness, the Yamaha does have motorcycling's second-best OEM sound system, one that is slightly better than the Kawasaki's and *light-years* beyond the FLT's optional system. Nonetheless, music and dialogue both come through most clearly on the Honda, and its speed-sensitive automatic loudness control regulates the volume more effectively than the Yamaha's ambient-noise-sensitive arrangement. All of the OEM systems could, however, use better nighttime lighting, as well as knobs and buttons that are easier to operate when wearing heavy gloves. The latter isn't a problem with the FLT's radio, though, since it's a simplistic, automotive-type unit that uses large, mechanical controls.

Actually, it's surprising that Harley makes a sound system available for the FLT at all, given the company's opinion that tour-worthiness is something that is built-in, not bolted-on. But oddly enough, the one turn-key machine that gives that philosophy the most credence is *not* Harley's own FLT; it's the Kawasaki. See, the Voyager's designers endowed the bike with practically every kind of touring accessory they could get their hands on; but instead of ending up with the world's greatest turn-key tourer, they simply built a rolling testimony to Harley-Davidson's beliefs. The Voyager graphically demonstrates that over-the-road competence isn't something you bolt on, or that is derived from merely being the biggest or heaviest or the most extensively equipped. And that's why the Voyager finishes last in this comparison. It is, admittedly, the fourth-best turn-key tourer in all the world, one we wouldn't balk at riding to Tierra del Fuego; but when measured by the standards set by its three competitors, the Voyager only has Cubic Stuff to offer—and it's the *wrong* stuff.

Both the Harley and the Yamaha, on the other hand, have some pretty good stuff, the rightness of which depends on your particular touring prejudices. The FLT lives at one extreme of two-wheel travel, out where the motorcycle is considered an open-air sightseeing platform whose operation ought to require minimal participation by the rider, leaving him to enjoy the sights he came to see. And within that definition of touring, the FLT is superb. Just be aware that when the Harley is not playing vacation bus,

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Ride Review

• The Harley makes me giggle. Out on the highway, with little else to do but watch the white line, the FLTC makes me laugh out loud inside my helmet. And I'm not entirely sure why. Perhaps it's the seductive rhythm of the engine pulses, or the way that massive vee-twin seems never to run out of torque. Or, it could be the uncanny directional stability of the big Hawg. Maybe it's the response from the young ladies at the local Haagen-Dazs.

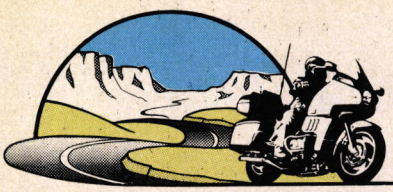
But, really, I don't think any of these is the answer. The truth is, the Harley flat surprises me. It works so well on the open road—in spite of its rough edges and idiosyncrasies—that I have a hard time *not* watching the scenery.

Sure, the Honda is a better tourer, and it deserves to win. In my eyes, though, the Harley is much more than an also-ran. *—Marc Cook*

• As far as I'm concerned, this comparison demonstrated that you still can't walk into a dealer and buy the perfect heavyweight tourer. As good as all of these bikes are, each one has its shortcomings. The Venture has a great engine, but the bike's top-heavy and the luggage is better suited to a pajama party than a long-distance tour. The FLT's dead-nuts stability makes it a sightseer's delight, but the bike is as rough-edged as a two-by-four cut with a rip saw. And everytime I ride the Voyager I get the feeling that I'm defying the laws of physics, and that defiance is going to catch up with me in a gravel parking lot somewhere around Truth Or Consequences, New Mexico. No, nobody makes the perfect tourer—but I do know what it costs, $8077. That's the price of a new Aspencade, plus $179 for a Markland cruise-control. *—Jim Miller*

• Sure, Kawasaki's Voyager has more electronic gizmos than most anything short of the space shuttle, and the FLTC is as civilized as Harley can bear to make it. And the Venture Royale is the hands-down roll-on king of the group, and can do a fair imitation of a sport-tourer. But the Voyager's novelties wore off before I reached the county line, the H-D is still too crude for my tastes, and even the Venture's speed fails to excite me.

That doesn't mean Honda's Aspencade is my pick purely by process of elimination. No, the Aspencade won me over with its taut, well-controlled suspension, its enormous cargo capacity and the best-sounding stereo of the lot. In fact, as I see it, there's only one thing wrong with the Aspencade—it's not mine. *—Charles Everitt*



it's merely a relatively slow, noticeably clunky, fairly uninspiring motorcycle.

At the opposite extreme is the Yamaha, a bike for those who enjoy the bike perhaps more than the travel, for those who don't want to forsake the thrill of riding a fast, responsive motorcycle just because they like to travel long distances. And thanks to its truly magnificent engine and highly competent chassis, the Venture Royale lets those riders have their cake and eat it, too.

It also makes our job of ranking the Venture Royale and the FLT all but impossible. The two machines are as different as night and day, yet both are equally competent in their specialized areas of touring. So, simply because the Yamaha is more versatile than the Harley, we awarded second place to the Venture Royale—fully recognizing, of course, that it would be easy to make a strong case for the reversal of those standings.

Either way, however, one thing will *not* change: The Honda wins. The Aspencade is the new King of Turn-Key Touring.

Truthfully, how could the Honda *not* win? It's the best there is in terms of smoothness, quietness, ride, feel, steering response and in its luggage and sound systems; and it's no less than second-best in every other meaningful category besides roll-on acceleration. The Aspencade also bends the laws of physics, for it is unusually stable without also being excessively large, and at the same time is uncommonly nimble without being prohibitively small. And that achievement, more than any other, allows the new Aspencade to span the entire spectrum of touring like no other bike ever has. The Honda is almost as efficient as the Harley when used as a pure sightseeing device, yet it's practically the equal of the Yamaha when pushed hard on a backroad. And in between those two extremes, it's clearly *better* than anything else on two wheels.

Come to think of it, then, maybe things haven't changed that much. The best turn-key touring bike in all the world still is a Honda, still is called an Aspencade, and still has the same competitors trying to shoot it down.

All that's *really* different is that they now have to aim an awful lot higher. ●

CYCLE GUIDE SPECIFICATIONS

MOTORCYCLE	Harley-Davidson FLTC
IMPORTER	Harley-Davidson Motor Company Inc. 3700 West Juneau Avenue Milwaukee, Wisconsin 53201
SUGGESTED RETAIL PRICE	$8799 ($9595.35 as tested*)
ENGINE	
Type	four-stroke 45-degree tandem vee-twin
Valve arrangement	pushrod-operated overhead valves
Bore and stroke	88.8mm x 108.0mm
Displacement	1337.7cc
Compression ratio	8.5:1
Engine redline	5500 rpm
Carburetion	one 38mm Keihin butterfly-type, with accelerator pump
Air filter	washable oiled foam element
Lubrication	dry sump
Starting system	electric only
Ignition	transistorized breakerless
Charging system	12-volt; 264-watt alternator, voltage regulator/rectifier, 19-ampere-hour battery
DRIVETRAIN	
Primary drive	double-row chain; 1.542:1 ratio
Crankshaft-to-jackshaft drive	
Jackshaft-to-transmission drive	
Clutch	dry, multi-plate
Transmission-to-driveshaft drive	
Driveshaft-to-rear-wheel drive	
Final drive	enclosed #530 chain (5/8-in. pitch, 3/8-in. width); 2.182:1 (48/22) ratio

Gear	Internal gear ratio	Overall gear ratio	MPH per 1000 RPM
I	3.241	10.902	6.62
II	2.210	7.434	9.70
III	1.603	5.392	13.38
IV	1.233	4.147	17.40
V	1.000	3.364	21.45

SUSPENSION/WHEEL TRAVEL	Front	Showa air-spring, 41mm stanchion tube diameter, brake-actuated pneumatic anti-dive/5.1 in. (130mm)
	Rear	dual Showa shocks, 5-position adjustable spring preload/3.0 in. (77mm)
BRAKES	Front	dual single-action hydraulic calipers, 11.2-in. (285mm) effective disc diameter
	Rear	single-action hydraulic caliper, 11.7-in. (297mm) effective disc diameter
TIRES	Front	MT90-16 Dunlop K101 tubeless
	Rear	MT90-16 Dunlop K101 tubeless
DIMENSIONS AND CAPACITIES		
Weight		774 lbs. (351.0kg)
Weight distribution		44.4% front, 55.6% rear
Gross vehicle weight rating (GVWR)		1180 lbs. (535kg)
Load capacity (with full fuel tank)		372 lbs. (169kg)
Wheelbase		62.3 to 63.5 in. (1583 to 1613mm)
Seat height		31.0 in. (788mm)
Handlebar width		29.7 in. (755mm)
Footboard height		12.6 in. (320mm)
Footpeg height		
Ground clearance		5.3 in. (135mm), at sidestand
Steering head angle		26.0 degrees from vertical
Front wheel trail		6.16 in. (156mm)
Frame		tubular, stamped and box-section mild steel, double front downtubes
Oil capacity		4.0 qt. (3.9/)
Fuel tank		steel, 5.6 gal. (21.0/), including 0.9 gal (3.5/) reserve
Instrumentation		speedometer, odometer, tripmeter resettable to zero, tachometer, fuel gauge
PERFORMANCE		
Fuel consumption range		39 to 54 mpg (17 to 23 km/l)
Average fuel consumption		46 mpg (20 km/l)
Cruising range, maximum		218 to 302 miles (351 to 486km)
Cruising range, reserve only		35 to 49 miles (56 to 79km)
Speedometer error, 30 mph indicated		29 mph actual
Speedometer error, 55 mph indicated		54 mph actual
Best 1/4-mile acceleration		14.603 sec., 88.75 mph (143 km/h)
Top speed (observed)		107 mph (172 km/h)
Stopping distance from 30 mph		40 ft. (12.2m)
Stopping distance from 60 mph		152 ft. (46.3m)
WARRANTY		12 months, unlimited mileage
AVAILABLE COLORS		Classic Tan with Cream; Classic Claret Red with Rose Metallic

*Includes price of optional AM/FM/cassette player, CB radio, AM/FM antenna, CB antenna

Honda Aspencade	Kawasaki Voyager	Yamaha Venture Royale
American Honda Motor Company Inc. 100 West Alondra Boulevard Gardena, California 90247	Kawasaki Motors Corp. 2001 East Edinger Avenue Santa Ana, California 92711	Yamaha Motor Corporation USA 6555 Katella Avenue Cypress, California 90630
$7898 ($8223 as tested*)	$8299	$8299
liquid-cooled four-stroke horizontally opposed four single overhead camshafts 75.5mm x 66.0mm 1181.9cc 9.0:1 7500 rpm four 30mm Keihin constant-vacuum	liquid-cooled four-stroke transverse vertical six double overhead camshafts 62.0mm x 71.1mm 1286.1cc 9.3:1 8250 rpm Nippondenso electronic fuel injection, three 32mm two-barrel throttle bodies	liquid-cooled four-stroke 70-degree tandem vee-four double overhead camshafts, four valves per cylinder 76.0mm x 66.0mm 1197.6cc 10.5:1 7500 rpm four 34mm Mikuni oval-venturi constant-vacuum downdraft
disposable paper element wet sump electric only transistorized breakerless 12-volt; 360-watt alternator, voltage regulator/rectifier, 20-ampere-hour battery	disposable paper element wet sump electric only transistorized breakerless 12-volt; 500-watt dual alternators (200W left; 300W right), voltage regulator/rectifier, 26-ampere-hour battery	disposable paper element wet sump electric only transistorized breakerless 12-volt; 420-watt alternator, voltage regulator/rectifier, 20-ampere-hour battery
inverted-tooth chain; 1.708:1 ratio	inverted-tooth chain; 1.333:1 ratio inverted-tooth chain; 1.381:1 ratio	straight-cut gears; 1.776:1 ratio
wet, multi-plate straight-cut gears; 0.897:1 ratio spiral-bevel gears; 2.833:1 ratio	wet, multi-plate spiral-bevel gears; 0.731:1 ratio spiral-bevel gears; 3.400:1 ratio	wet, multi-plate spiral-bevel gears; 0.778:1 ratio spiral-bevel gears; 3.300:1 ratio

Internal gear ratio	Overall gear ratio	MPH per 1000 RPM
2.642	11.467	6.37
1.667	7.235	10.09
1.250	5.425	13.46
1.000	4.340	16.83
0.829	3.598	20.30

Internal gear ratio	Overall gear ratio	MPH per 1000 RPM
2.563	11.723	6.46
1.800	8.235	9.19
1.375	6.290	12.04
1.111	5.083	14.90
0.931	4.259	17.78

Internal gear ratio	Overall gear ratio	MPH per 1000 RPM
2.600	11.849	6.35
1.773	8.079	9.31
1.348	6.142	12.25
1.069	4.871	15.45
0.906	4.130	18.22

Showa air-spring, 41mm stanchion tube diameter, brake-actuated hydraulic anti-dive/5.3 in. (136mm) dual Showa air-spring shocks/3.9 in. (100mm)	Kayaba air-spring, 41mm stanchion tube diameter/6.1 in. (156mm) dual Kayaba air-spring shocks, 4-position adjustable rebound damping/3.8 in. (97mm)	Kayaba air-spring, 40mm stanchion tube diameter, brake-actuated hydraulic anti-dive/5.4 in. (138mm) single Yamaha air-spring shock, 4-position adjustable rebound damping/4.2 in. (107mm)
dual single-action hydraulic calipers, 10.7-in. (272mm) effective disc diameter single-action hydraulic caliper, 11.5-in. (291mm) effective disc diameter	dual single-action hydraulic calipers, 11.7-in. (298mm) effective disc diameter single-action hydraulic caliper, 12.9-in. (328mm) effective disc diameter	dual double-action hydraulic calipers, 11.7-in. (298mm) effective disc diameter double-action hydraulic caliper, 11.7-in. (298mm) effective disc diameter
130/90-16 67H Dunlop Qualifier F11 tubeless 150/90-15 74H Dunlop Qualifier K627 tubeless	MR90-18 Dunlop Qualifier F-11 tubeless MU90-16 Dunlop Qualifier K427M tubeless	120/90-18 65H Dunlop Qualifier F16 tubeless 140/90-16 71H Dunlop Qualifier K827 tubeless
744 lbs. (337.4kg) 45.4% front, 54.6% rear 1165 lbs. (528kg) 386 lbs. (175kg) 63.5 in. (1613mm) 31.5 in. (800mm) 32.7 in. (830mm)	882 lbs. (400.0kg) 43.4% front, 56.3% rear 1285 lbs. (583kg) 360 lbs. (163kg) 65.0 in. (1651mm) 30.0 in. (762mm) adjustable from 24.6 to 36.3 in. (624 to 923mm)	752 lbs. (341.0kg) 46.2% front, 53.8% rear 1168 lbs. (530kg) 382 lbs. (173kg) 63.5 in. (1612mm) 31.5 in. (800mm) adjustable from 23.8 to 33.4 in. (604 to 848mm)
11.0 in. (278mm) 5.7 in. (144mm), at exhaust heat shield 30.0 degrees from vertical 4.65 in. (118mm) tubular mild steel, double front downtubes	10.8 in. (273mm) 5.6 in. (142mm), at exhaust crossover 29.5 degrees from vertical 5.51 in. (140mm) tubular mild steel, double front downtubes	12.2 in. (310mm) 5.5 in. (140mm), at centerstand feet 28.5 degrees from vertical 4.92 in. (125mm) tubular mild steel, double front downtubes
4.2 qt. (4.0/) steel, 5.8 gal. (22.0/), no reserve LCD digital speedometer, odometer, LCD count-up tripmeter resettable to zero, LCD count-down tripmeter resettable from 1 to 999 miles, LCD digital tachometer, LCD digital gear-position indicator, LCD fuel gauge, LCD coolant temperature gauge, LCD suspension air pressure readout, LCD radio frequency readout, LCD digital clock	6.2 qt. (5.9/) steel, 7.1 gal. (27.0/), including 1.2 gal. (4.5/) reserve LCD digital speedometer, odometer, LCD tripmeter resettable to zero, LCD bar-graph tachometer, LCD fuel gauge, LCD coolant temperature gauge, LCD voltmeter, LCD monitor system, LCD overdrive indicator, LCD cruise indicator, LCD compass, LCD clock/radio-frequency display, LCD trip computer, suspension air pressure gauge	4.8 qt. (4.5/) steel, 5.5 gal. (20.8/), including 0.9 gal. (3.3/) reserve speedometer, odometer, tripmeter resettable to zero, tachometer, coolant temperature gauge, voltmeter, LCD monitor system, LCD fuel gauge, LCD gear-positon indicator, LCD clock/stopwatch, LED radio-frequency readout, LCD suspension air pressure readout
33 to 46 mpg (14 to 20 km/l) 41 mpg (17 km/l) 191 to 267 miles (307 to 430km) no reserve capacity 29 mph actual 52 mph actual 13.156 sec., 98.14 mph (158 km/h) 118 mph (190 km/h) 35 ft. (10.7m) 141 ft. (43.0m)	28 to 44 mpg (12 to 19 km/l) 35 mpg (15 km/l) 199 to 312 miles (320 to 502km) 34 to 53 miles (55 to 85km) 28 mph actual 50 mph actual 13.346 sec., 97.61 mph (157 km/h) 116 mph (187 km/h) 36 ft. (11.0m) 142 ft. (43.3m)	37 to 53 mpg (16 to 23 km/l) 43 mpg (18 km/l) 204 to 292 miles (328 to 470km) 33 to 48 miles (53 to 77km) 29 mph actual 52 mph actual 12.759 sec., 101.46 mph (163 km/h) 124 mph (200 km/h) 34 ft. (10.4m) 137 ft. (41.8m)
12 months, unlimited mileage	12 months, unlimited mileage	2 years, 24,000 miles on engine and drivetrain; 1 year on everything else
red; blue; metallic beige	Metallic Black with Wine Red only	Alluvial Gold with Silky Gold; New Ruby Red with Romanesque Crimson

*Includes price of optional CB radio system

These specifications refer to 49-state motorcycles not legal for sale in California.

You have 16 chances to WIN THE BIKE OF YOUR CHOICE: IN CYCLE GUIDE'S ALL NEW BIGGER AND BETTER -MORE PRIZES THAN EVER-

1984 $

CYCLE GUIDE invites you to enter this **ALL NEW 1984 SUPER $60,000 MOTORCYCLE SWEEPSTAKES.** You may be one of **TWO LUCKY GRAND PRIZE WINNERS** to drive away on the **DELUXE TOURING BIKE** of your choice.
Or maybe you'll win one of 489 other great prizes—including Hyperbikes, Motocrossers, Enduros, and Street Middleweights. With a total of 16 bikes to be given away, you have 16 chances to WIN that special motorcycle you've always wanted. **SEND YOUR ENTRY TODAY!**

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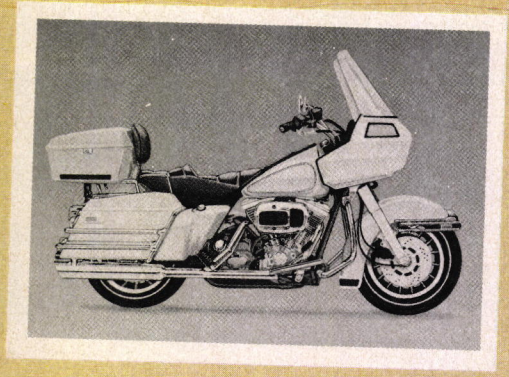
Just select the FULL-DRESS TOURING BIKE of your choice on your Official Entry Form, order CYCLE GUIDE if you wish, complete, stamp and mail today!

2 GRAND PRIZES The Full-Dress Touring Bike Of Your Choice:



*** HARLEY-DAVIDSON FLT CLASSIC** Probably the best 2-wheeled sightseeing platform ever built. It allows you to effortlessly 'ease on down the road' in classic American style and comfort.

*** HONDA GL1200A ASPENCADE** The bike that originated 'turn-key touring' is bigger and better than ever with more power, improved handling, an all-new sound system, high-tech instrumentation and sleeker styling.

***KAWASAKI 1300 VOYAGER** The unchallenged King of Cubic Stuff. Simply the biggest, most entertaining, most elaborately equipped over-the-road motorcycle ever built.

*** YAMAHA 1200 VENTURE ROYALE** It adds a dimension never before found in a full-dress touring machine: sporty back-road handling. And the awesome vee-four engine is smooth, torquey and incredibly fast.

25 THIRD PRIZES

NAVA GRAND PRIX HELMETS Nava's all-new fiberglass helmet—with crisp, racy Italian styling, colorful graphics and sleek aerodynamics. Precision computer molded fiberglass shell lined with soft brushed velour and supple padding guarantee long lasting comfort.

4 FIRST PRIZES The Hyperbike Of Your Choice:

*** HONDA VF1000F INTERCEPTOR** Take one 750cc Interceptor, 1983's Bike of the Year, and give it a 33% increase in displacement, and you've got what some think is the ultimate sport motorcycle—of all time!

*** KAWASAKI GPz900R** Its all-new, 16-valve, liquid-cooled engine is 'only' a 900, but with 125 hp on tap, its performance takes a backseat to no bike of any size.

*** SUZUKI GS1150ES** The finest hyperbike on earth for the past four years now has an even bigger engine, an all-new single-shock chassis and dramatic new styling. It looks as fast as it actually is.

*** YAMAHA FJ1100** Packed with GP-racing know-how, Yamaha's first liter-class sportbike threatens to do on the street what so many Yamaha racers have done on the track: whip the competition.

SUPER 60,000.00 MOTORCYCLE SWEEPSTAKES

TWO GRAND PRIZES–Win The Full-Dress Touring Bike Of Your Choice

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10 SECOND PRIZES Your Choice Of:

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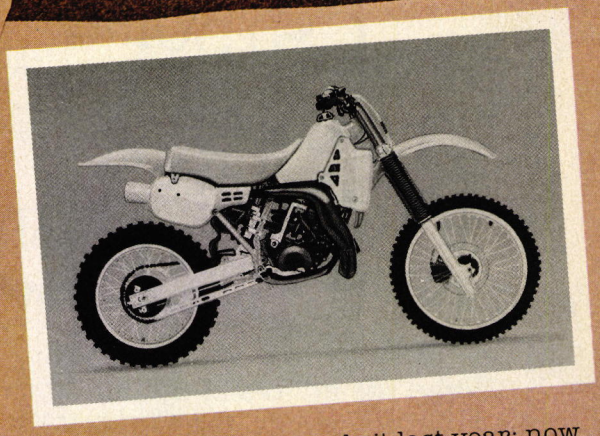
* **HONDA VF500F INTERCEPTOR** The instant you climb on, you feel—and act—like Freddie Spencer, World Champion roadracer.
* **KAWASAKI GPz550** One ride and you know why it's become the world's most popular 550-class street hot-rod.
* **SUZUKI GS550ES** So fast and agile, it's hard to believe this is only a 550cc street machine instead of a racebike.
* **YAMAHA RZ350LC** They call it the Kenny Roberts Special. It's not just like a real racebike, it **is** a real racebike—with lights.

MOTOCROSSER

* **HONDA CR250R** Able to make a winner out of almost anyone.
* **KAWASAKI KX250** A product of Team Green's Supercross success.
* **YAMAHA YZ250** High-tech, high-powered and ready to win.



* **SUZUKI RM250** Barnett rode it last year; now it's your turn.

ENDURO

* **KAWASAKI KDX200** If you can't do it on the KDX, you can't do it at all.
* **HONDA XR200R** No longer just a playbike but a serious enduro racer.
* **YAMAHA IT200** Bigger, stronger and faster than ever for '84.

50 FOURTH PRIZES

ECLIPSE TANK BAG America's first and finest. Mounts securely and quickly on a neoprene pad that protects your tank. 5 pockets offer 1200 cu. in. of truly versatile luggage. Includes a removable belt pouch and non-glare map case.

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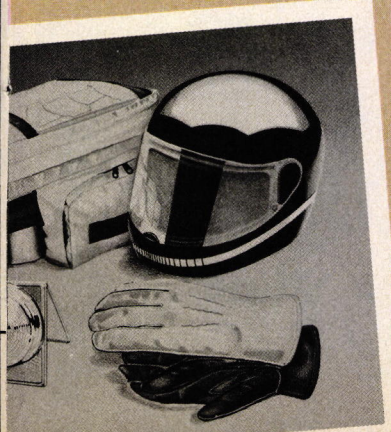
ECLIPSE NIGHT RIDER A bright, flashing roadside warning light that's visible for hundreds of feet. Powered by wafer-thin batteries, the complete unit is less than 4" x 3-1/2" x 1" in size.

One Entry gives you 491 Chances to Win one of 491 total Prizes—with a total value over $60,000



OFFICIAL SWEEPSTAKES RULES

1. NO PURCHASE NECESSARY! Use the enclosed card to enter, or print your name, address and zip code on a 3"x5" piece of paper. Mail each entry separately to CYCLE GUIDE, 1984 SUPER $60,000.00 MOTORCYCLE SWEEPSTAKES, P.O. Box 944, Farmingdale, NY 11737.

2. All prizes will be awarded in a drawing to be held under the supervision of an independent Certified Public Accountant before August 12, 1984. Decisions of the Judges are final. Winners will be notified by mail within 30 days of Drawing.

3. All entries must be postmarked by June 29, 1984 and received by July 12, 1984 to be eligible for Drawing.

4. You may win one of a total of 491 prizes—2 Grand Prizes, 4 First Prizes, 10 Second Prizes, 25 Third Prizes, 50 Fourth Prizes, 100 Fifth Prizes, 300 Sixth Prizes. All are guaranteed to be awarded.

5. Only 1 Major Prize per household. Prizes based upon availability at participating dealer. Substitution upon mutual agreement of prize winner and participating dealer for motorcycle of equal value. Sales tax is the sole responsibility of prizewinner.

6. **CYCLE GUIDE'S ALL NEW 1984 SUPER $60,000 MOTORCYCLE SWEEPSTAKES** is open to Residents of the United States. All Federal, State and Local laws apply; void where prohibited. Employees of Cycle Guide Inc., their families and their respective agencies and affiliates are not eligible.

7. A partial list of prize winners will be available after September 1, 1984.

RAVE REVIEWS.

"...the GS750EZ is The Class Act of the 750 class."

CYCLE GUIDE Magazine, Jan. 1982

When the editors of *Cycle Guide* called our GS750EZ..."the Class Act of the 750 class," they weren't pulling any punches. Because the bike (like the review) was an absolute knockout.

So you can imagine how much *more* of a knockout our 750-class champ is now that we've knocked over four hundred dollars off the original price...during the Suzuki Knockout Savings Sale.

Fact is, there's a whole range of top-rated Suzuki street machines on sale, making all that heavyweight performance more affordable than ever before.

But like anything else worthwhile, the Suzuki Knockout Savings Sale won't last forever. Because once these performance champs are gone, that's it. No extra rounds. No second chances.

So get to your Suzuki dealer fast. The savings may very well floor you.

SUZUKI

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The Supplier of Motorcycles and All-Terrain Vehicles to the 1984 Olympic Games.

RAVE REDUCTIONS.

GS750EZ

'82 GS750EZ

NOW $2499

Suzuki's knock-out savings also apply to these as well as other selected Suzuki models.

'82GS750TZ

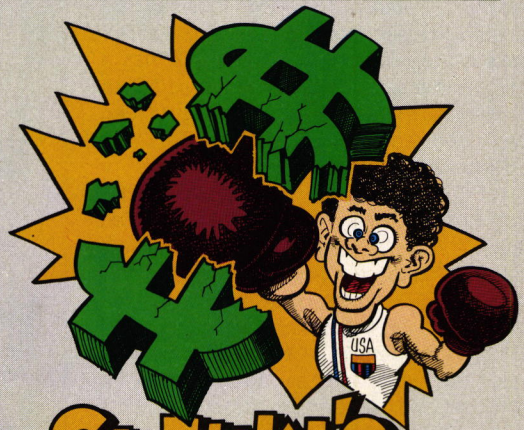
NOW $2199

'82 GS650GZ

NOW $2059

'82 GS650GLZ

NOW $2119



SUZUKI'S KNOCKOUT SAVINGS SALE!

Manufacturer's suggested retail price. Actual price set by dealers. Taxes, license, freight, options and other dealer charges extra. Prices may change without notice. Availability is limited.

GUIDE LINES

Cycle Guide's Monthly Chronicle of Scoops, Tips, Rumors and Hard Facts

COMING SOON

• With the transports from the Far East unloaded and the two-wheeled cargo scrutinized, attention can shift to the boats from Europe and that part of moto-'84. And Italy's Moto Guzzi has some new machinery to roll down the gangplanks this year. The '84 Guzzi lineup is highlighted by the 850 T-5, a European shaftdrive alternative for the sport rider. Sixteen-inch wheels both front and rear, triple-disc brakes and a claimed dry weight of 485 pounds are some of the attractions on this newest, quarter-faired Italobike. The 850 T-5, like all 1984 Moto Guzzis bound for the U.S., is powered by a transverse vee-twin with a 90 degree cylinder spread, updated this year with a Nigusil cylinder-wall treatment. The new electrically applied Nigusil bore-coating is claimed to provide greater durability and better heat transfer than the chromed cylinder bores Moto Guzzi formerly used.

• A 650cc Guzzi is also new this year, available either as the V65 C, what the company calls an "American tourer," or as the V65 SP, a traditional European sport-tourer. Styling is the main difference: The V65 C comes in conservative cruiser garb with a pair of saddlebags and a windscreen, while the SP has a low handlebar and a quarter-fairing. Both bikes feature Guzzi's integral braking system, five-speed gearboxes and shaft drive.

• Those are the three new Moto Guzzis for '84. But returning stars from the class of '83 include the 850 Le Mans III, an undiluted taste of supersport Italian. Clip-ons, rearsets and a performance-tuned vee-twin define this bike. The 850 Le Mans III also has revamped suspension for '84, featuring a longer-travel fork than last year's Le Mans. Other changes made for performance are a reworked air-intake tract and a revised exhaust system.

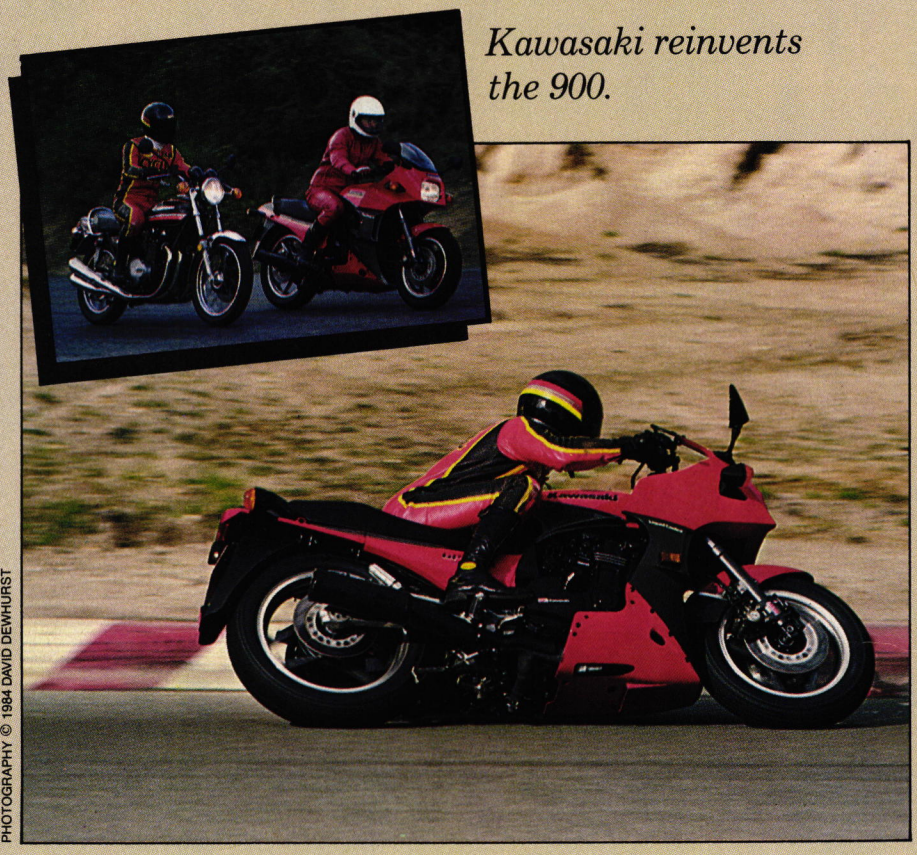
• The 1000 SP, Moto Guzzi's big-bore sport-tourer, also has a redesigned exhaust system, but on this bike, Guzzi showcased the fairing and lowers. These parts were designed in a wind-tunnel, with good fuel mileage and rider protection as the goals. Guzzi also claims this bodywork exerts an aerodynamic downforce to keep the 1000 SP stable at high speed. And this year the bike has some frame and control-placement changes also, modifications aimed at making this machine comfortable for tall riders.

• One of the best-selling Guzzis of 1983 was the California II, a no-frills touring bike based on the Moto Guzzi police model. So the Cali-

RIDE/REPORT:

Kawasaki GPz900R Ninja

Kawasaki reinvents the 900.



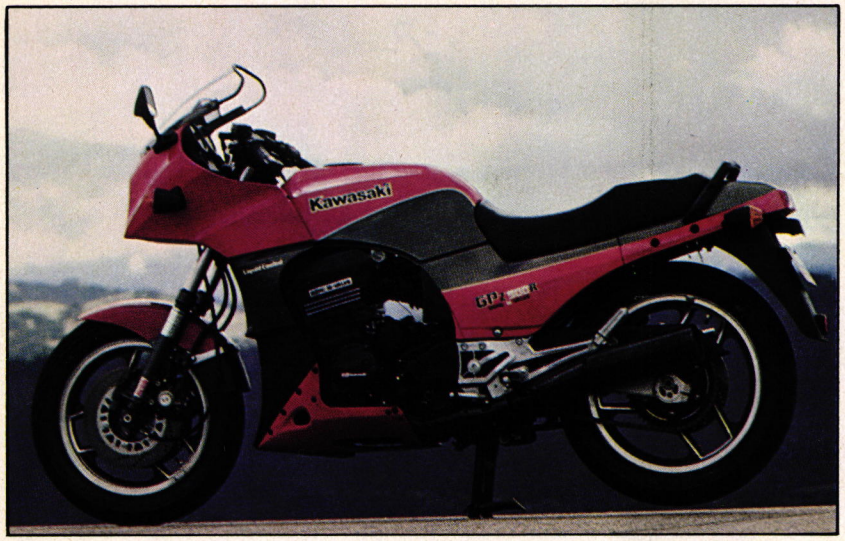
PHOTOGRAPHY © 1984 DAVID DEWHURST

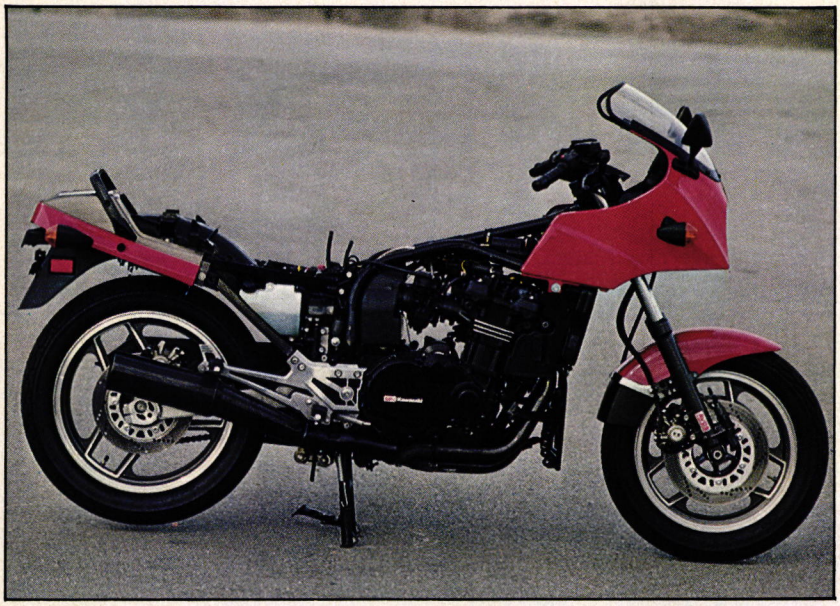
• History is set to repeat itself. Kawasaki has created a lineal descendant of the original 903cc Z-1 in the GPz900R Ninja that's coming soon. It's been a decade since the Z-1's introduction and, despite yearly refinements that eventually led to the current 1089cc engine in the GPz1100, the old Z-1-based design couldn't keep Kawasaki on top of the hyperbike heap.

As a result, Kawasaki embarked on a six-year project and developed the GPz900R Ninja (the English translation means "attacker") as the company's new sporting flagship. The Ninja is Kawasaki's newest musclebike and, like the Z-1, its engine displaces slightly more than 900cc—908cc, to be exact, a size Kawasaki believes is large enough to propel the claimed 501-pound sportbike to the top.

Kawasaki's goal was to build a sporter with the acceleration and top speed of a literbike and the roadholding agility of a three-quarter-liter machine. To help accomplish that goal, a compact, lightweight inline four-cylinder engine was designed. The motor is about one-inch wider than Honda's VF750F engine, and is claimed to pump out 113 horsepower. The liquid-cooled 16-valver revs quickly and a six-speed gearbox helps the rider keep the engine in its powerband, between 7500 rpm and the 10,500-rpm redline.

For handling performance, Kawasaki matched the Ninja's 29 degrees of steering head angle and 114mm of trail with a 16-inch front wheel. In addition, the Ninja's diamond frame uses the engine as a stressed member. The design also eliminates the frame's downtubes, in order to place the engine as



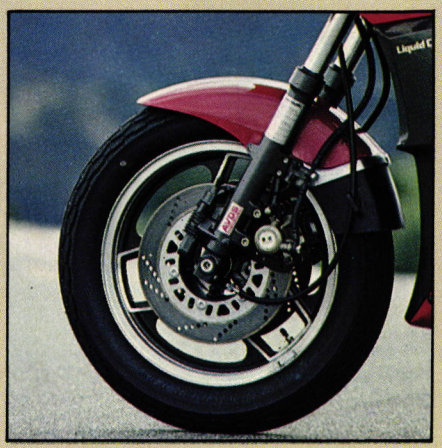


Riding the Ninja is a lot like riding a racer: It helps to tuck in

But it's still a streetbike, with a soft seat and well-placed handlebars.

A 900 with liquid-cooling and 16 valves

All-new motor, but a familiar size.



Anti-dive and variable-damping fork

Kawasaki gets serious about its front.

low as possible for a low center of gravity. And Kawasaki's efforts yielded a motorcycle that responds quickly to rider input, with wonderfully predictable, almost neutral steering.

By comparison, the Ninja's suspension is fairly conventional. Both ends are air-assisted, and the fork incorporates Kawasaki's Automatic Variable Damping System (AVDS) for progressive compression damping, and a three-way-adjustable anti-dive system. At the rear, the Ninja's Uni-Trak suspension uses an extruded-aluminum swingarm with eccentric-cam chain adjusters, just like on the 750 and 1100 GPzs. Also like on the larger GPzs, the 900's rear shock has four-way-adjustable rebound damping.

All of which contributes to the 900R's roadracer-like handling. The Ninja won't deviate from your chosen line or wobble when you start charging into corners. It's easy to flick side-to-side, too, and the anti-dive setup assists in hard braking. In fact, the only performance-related shortcoming is the choice of tires. The Dunlop rubber sticks well during eight-tenths riding, but when you push the 900R closer to racing speeds, the tires start to slip. For most street riding, though, the Ninja's tires should pose no handling problems.

Perhaps more than anything else, however, it's the Ninja's ergonomics that make you feel like you *are* racing even though you aren't. The contoured seat suits hanging-off, while the slightly rearset footpegs and angled handlebars make it easy to tuck in behind the full fairing. It's a comfortable sport-riding position, and the only time you might want to come up for air is to see the road more clearly; the GPz900R's plexiglass windscreen has minor distortion. There's no vision-blur due to engine vibration, though. Thanks to a gear-driven counterbalancer beneath the crankshaft, the 908cc inline-four stays smooth, even at redline.

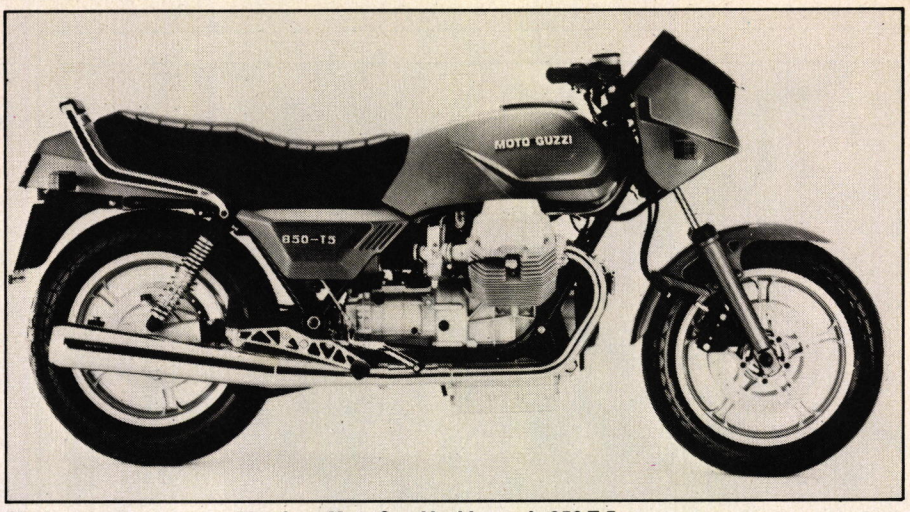
Along with the counterbalancer is a long list of techno-features that Kawasaki hopes will help re-establish the inline four-cylinder engine at the head of the sportbike class. Frictional losses, for example, are reduced by polishing the primary and balancer drive gears. Further attention was paid to hydraulic drag, too; there's a small dam to isolate the clutch and balancer gears from oil splash in the sump. And little extras, such as the 900R's hollow camshafts, make the engine a claimed 11 pounds lighter (including both the oil and water radiators) than the 1974 Z-1 motor.

The payoff for Kawasaki's work was a 10.559-second quarter-mile ET by dragrace specialist Pee Wee Gleason, which makes the GPz900R the quickest production motorcycle to date. It would appear, then, that Kawasaki, with the Ninja, is headed back to the top of the high-performance world. And, as before, the trump card is a 900cc motorcycle. All that remains is to see if the Ninja can withstand the forthcoming volley from the other new literbikes of 1984. *—Dain Gingerelli*

fornia II, with its standard-equipment footboards, luggage rack, windscreen and saddlebags, is back in the lineup for '84. But not without some changes: This year's version also has a new exhaust system, and the 948.8cc twin-cylinder engine got the Nigusil treatment on its barrels.

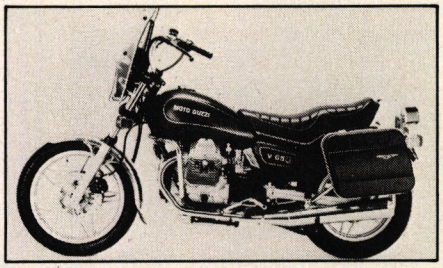
• There was no Nigusil for the cylinder bores of another newly arrived Italian two-wheeler: the Benelli 900 Sei. Priced at $3700 for '84, this inline-six is an affordable exotic. Clean, quarter-faired styling, and a claimed top speed of 130-plus mph, could spark the interest of a bargain-hunter looking for an unusual non-Oriental sport machine. After all, how many Japanese bikes come standard with triple Dell'Ortos?

• Up that buy-in price a bit, though, say to $5500, and another Italian exotic comes into focus: a Euro-spec Laverda RGA Jota 1000. The bike is powered by the same basic triple-cylinder engine (with the new 120 degree crank) as used in the Laverda RGS we tested last year, but this Jota has a new-style exhaust collector designed to boost the bike's midrange punch. Slater Bros. U.S.A., the importer (Box 730, Kenwood, Calif. 95452), says that because of a strong European demand only a limited number of these Jotas will be available in the U.S. The high-performance Laverdas are distinctively painted in metallic blue with black or traditional Jota orange with black, so riders of these sporters won't have to worry about being lost in a crowd.



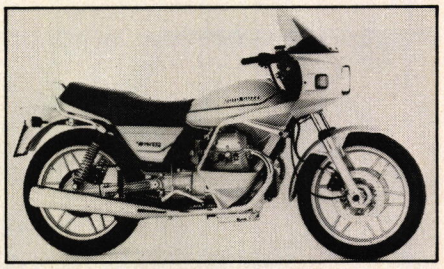
The latest pure-sport machine from Moto Guzzi is this year's 850 T-5

Blending Italian tradition with up-to-the-minute sportbike technology.



The V65 C is an all-new cruising tourer

Mixing a teardrop tank with saddlebags.



Style Number II for Guzzi's new V65

In this case SP means Euro-standard.

Audio Cannon: The most incredible sound system ever put on two wheels.

T.M.

Audio Cannon by National Cycle represents the first truly high fidelity audio system designed specifically for motorcycle use. It is adaptable to fit virtually any motorcycle with its fully adjustable mounting chassis, and allows quick and easy removal with its tubular locking system.

The Audio Cannon has a unique bass tuned "horn-like" shape that creates a directional sound field unlike any other system. Due to this design, the sound is actually "shot" from the speakers straight to the rider, increasing system efficiency. The result is excellent audibility even in the high noise level environment of a motorcycle at speed.

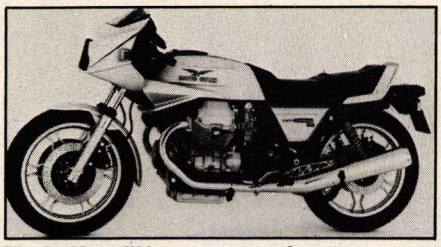
The Audio Cannon also features the largest speakers available in any motorcycle sound system. These state-of-the-art "domed" mylar tweeters with Ferrofluid™ cooling are coaxially mounted to give these waterproofed speakers high accuracy and efficiency.

An aircraft style, quick disconnect power coupling is standard with goldplated contacts for a trouble free service life.

And unlike all systems using earphones, the Audio Cannon is fully legal on highways in all 50 states.

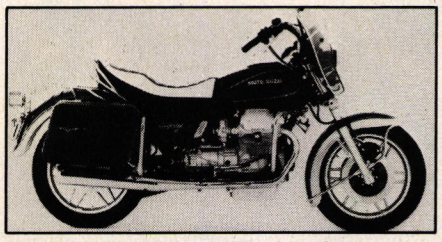
N5010 Audio Cannon (7/8" bars) $159.95. N5020 Audio Cannon prewired with Sparkomatic SR305 40 watts RMS with equalizer, $279.95. N5030 Audio Cannon prewired with Sparkomatic SR308 40 watts RMS, ETR, Seek, Scan and 5 preset channels with LED readouts, $379.95. Send certified check or money order, please add $20.00 shipping and handling. Kits available for 1" or square bars as well as an additional whip antenna for very best remote FM reception. For more information contact: National Cycle, Inc. 2200 Maywood Dr., P.O. Box 158, Maywood, IL 60153-0158. (312) 343-0400.

• And with a Stage III tuning kit for the bike, Jota riders (or RGS 1000 pilots, for that matter) shouldn't have too much trouble staying toward the front of a high-performance pack. This hop-up package, developed by Slater Bros., Great Britain, fits all 120-degree-crank Laverda triples. The Stage III kit is made up of a "Power-Flow" exhaust, high-compression pistons and high-lift camshafts. While the pieces can be purchased individually, Slater



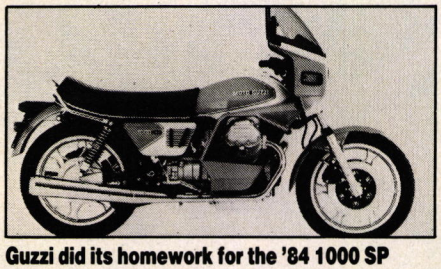
The Le Mans III is more potent than ever

And has a reworked suspension, too.



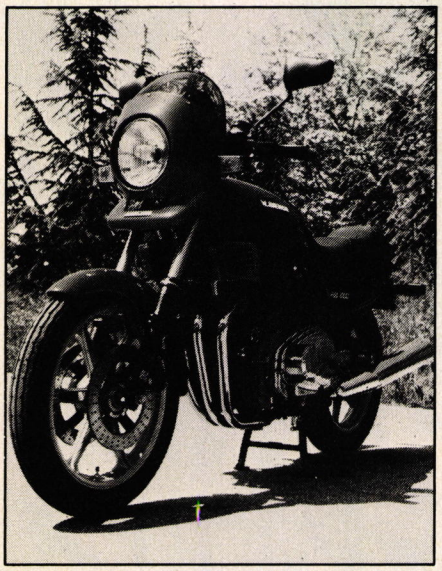
The California II was an '83 sales winner

A big market for a bare-bones tourer.



Guzzi did its homework for the '84 1000 SP

Spending extra time in the wind tunnel.



Slater Bros. is selling Euro-spec Jotas

Act fast while the supply lasts.

Continued

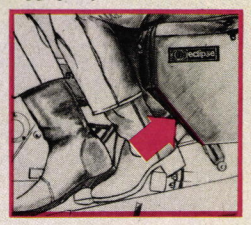
"Eclipse Saddlepacks... the best-engineered soft luggage system we've seen."

— Cycle (July '83)

"They are useful, very well made, durable and adaptable...Eclipse Saddlepacks earn their keep."

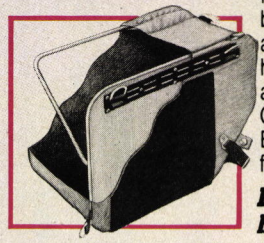
— Cycle World (February '83)

How good are Eclipse Saddlepacks? Just read what the experts say. One evaluation after another points to Eclipse Saddlepacks as the best soft luggage system available.



A leg up on the competition

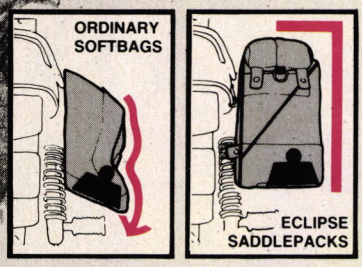
The experts appreciated exclusive Eclipse details like the cutaway front corner of each Saddlepack which creates extra space for your passenger's bootheel. Or the fully adjustable mounting harness that adapts to almost any motorcycle. Or the overall quality of Eclipse materials and fabrication.



Rigid standards hold up on the road

The pros also demonstrated how the unique Eclipse Internal Support Frame (patent pending) offers superior structural integrity for easier loading, more cargo capacity, and better weight distribution.

An aircraft aluminum stiffener fits inside each Saddlepack, combining with a hinged support rod to define and maintain the pack's shape — empty or loaded. Eclipse has eliminated the unattractive, unstable sag and sway so common with ordinary soft saddlebags.



It's no surprise that Eclipse Saddlepacks withstood such rigorous testing. After all, Eclipse products are designed to pass the evaluation that really counts . . . ***yours.***

Saddlepacks I — $199.95
Saddlepacks II — $139.95

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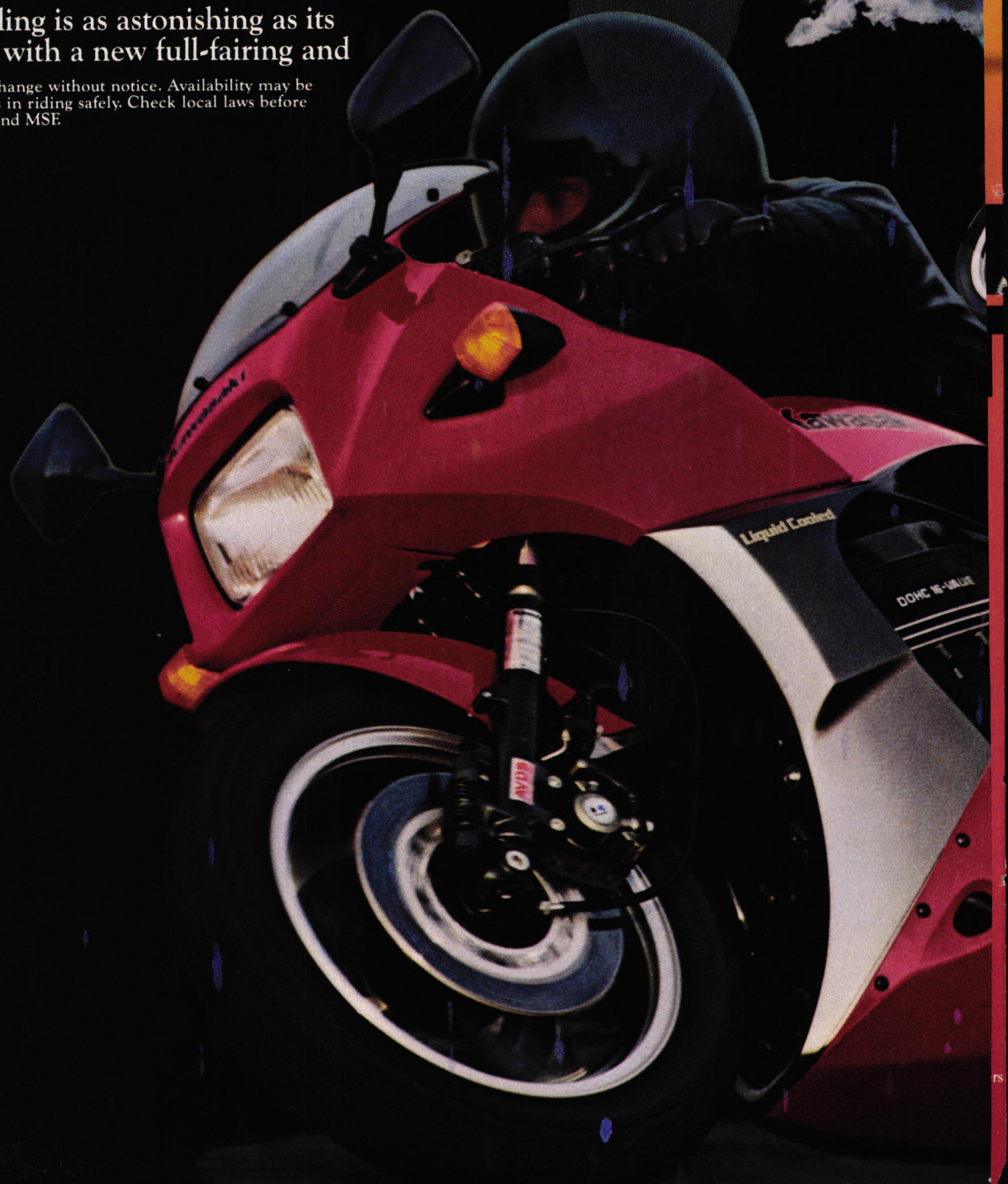
Now Kawasaki introduces a motorcycle that dares to be called Ninja...the fastest production motorcycle in the world...recently clocked at an incredible 10.55 seconds in the ¼ mile.

Ninja...908cc's of pure Kawasaki twin-cam horsepower. Liquid-cooled with 4 valves per cylinder. With a gear-driven balancer that smoothes out the slightest vibration, new straight-shot intake-exhaust paths for instant response and a 6-speed gear-box and hydraulic clutch that puts the power-band at your fingertips.

The Ninja's styling is as astonishing as its performance...with a new full-fairing and

Specifications subject to change without notice. Availability may be limited. Kawasaki believes in riding safely. Check local laws before you ride. Member AMA and MSF.



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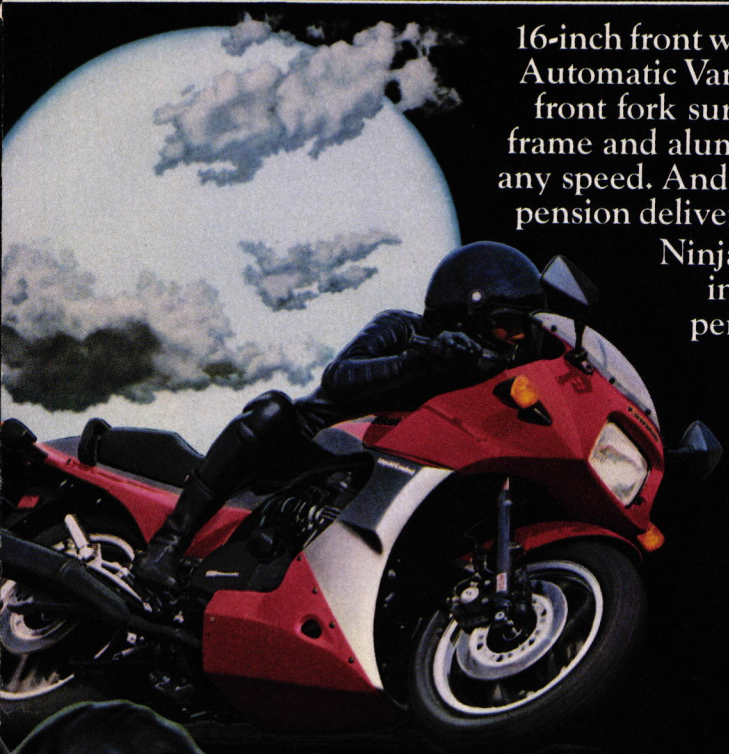
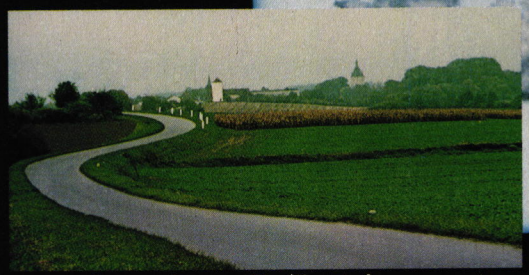
OF KAWASAKI PERFORMANCE.



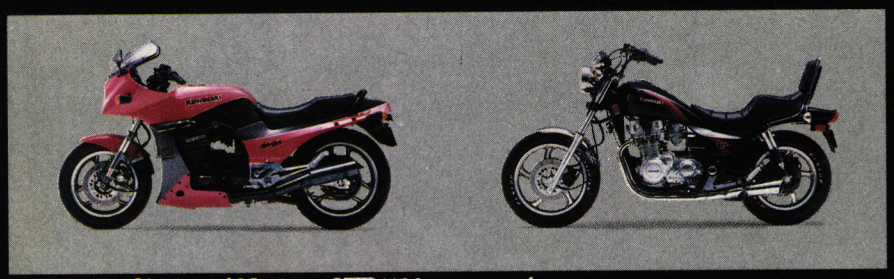
16-inch front wheel. Anti-dive and the Ninja's exclusive Automatic Variable Damping System (AVDS) give the front fork sure-footed control. A light, rigid diamond-frame and aluminum rear section improve handling at any speed. And exclusive rising-rate Uni-Trak® rear suspension delivers incredibly precise control and balance.

Ninja...unsurpassed for speed...unequaled in styling. For those who have waited for performance and excitement of this magnitude, Kawasaki unleashes the Ninja... the next generation of **Kawasaki** Kawasaki performance. Let the good times roll.

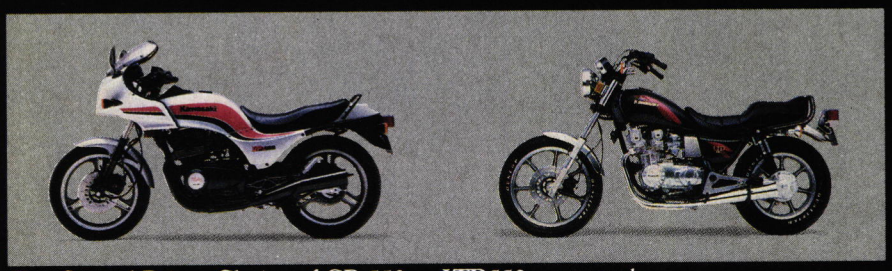
Kawasaki's 12-month/unlimited mileage limited warranty may be extended up to three years on major components with the Kawasaki Backup System. See your dealer for details.



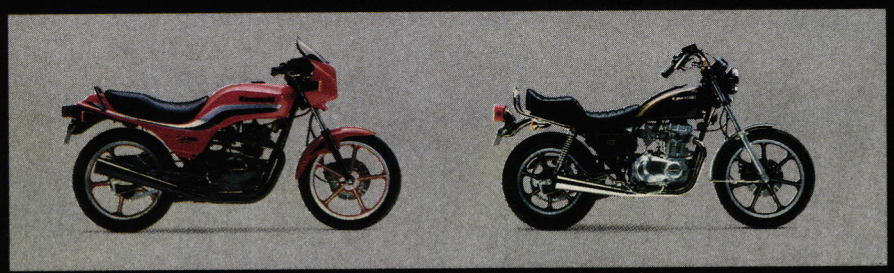
Grand Prize: Two week European motorcycle tour for two. You'll visit four countries: Austria, Switzerland, Italy and France. This is the tour for people who appreciate the extraordinary. Featuring some of Europe's best motorcycling, plus some of Europe's most interesting and luxurious hotels and restaurants. Plus the grandest prize of all... two new Ninjas upon return home.



First Prize: Choice of Ninja or LTD1100 motorcycle



Two Second Prizes: Choice of GPz550 or LTD550 motorcycle



Three Third Prizes: Choice of GPz305 or LTD440 motorcycle

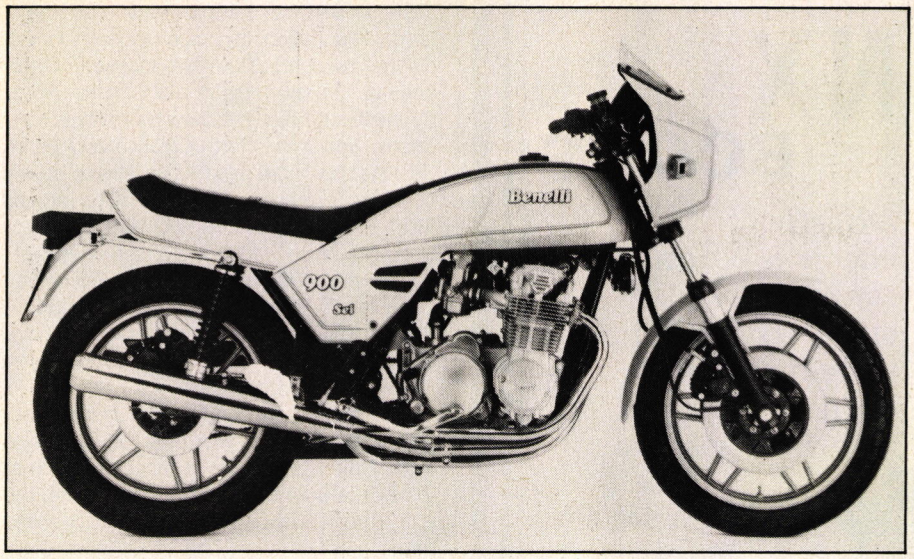
Plus: 50 Bell helmets, 100 Kawasaki goggles, 500 Kawasaki Ninja T-shirts, and 10,000 Kawasaki Ninja Key-chains.

DISCOVER THE NINJA SWEEPSTAKES

What better way to discover the world of the Ninja, than to enter Kawasaki's "Discover the Ninja" Sweepstakes. Over 10,000 prizes will be given away, so visit your Kawasaki dealer and register now—no purchase necessary. While you're there, take a look at Kawasaki's astonishing new Ninja... the fastest production motorcycle in the world. Come in today. Get the full details and enter Kawasaki's "Discover the Ninja" Sweepstakes.

Kawasaki
Let the good times roll.

No purchase required. Entries must be received on or before April 2, 1984. Valid drivers license required. Residents of Ohio or any state write "Ninja" c/o Chapek, Inc., P.O. Box 514, Santa Barbara, CA 93101 for details and entry form. Limit one entry per mailed envelope. Void where prohibited.



1984 Benelli 900 Sei is not only exotic, it's a bargain, as well

Just a little more than $600 per cylinder.

The Trial 300 is Fantic's newest

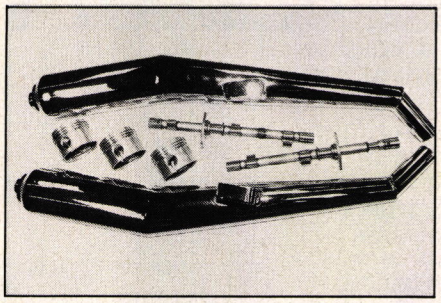
And, at 300cc, its biggest, as well.

OSSA's Trial 303 will take on all comers

'83's prototype became '84's product.

This year's Cota 350 has a familiar look

To maintain a Montesa tradition.



Slater Bros. Stage III kit for Laverdas

Performance tuning for the triple.

Bros. recommends installing the complete kit for the maximum performance increase.

• Performance of another sort is on tap with the introduction of three new big-bore trials machines. Fantic Motors, for one, has just released its full-sized Trial 300. Besides having a new 17-horsepower engine, the bike has numerous detail differences from previous Fantic offerings, all due to experience Fantic has had with its 125cc and 240cc plonkers.

• Montesa's latest section-stalker is the Cota 350, with a revised frame and suspension this year. Other revamps on this Cota, which maintains a traditional Montesa look, include some engine-tuning changes aimed at making the bike a formidable cliff-climbing ally.

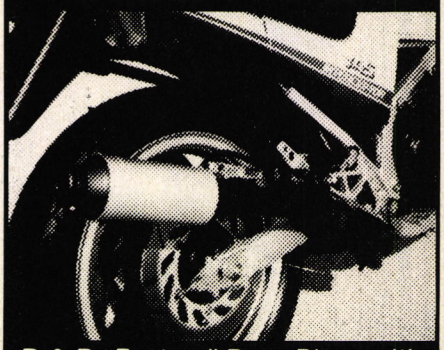
• The third trials machine just released is OSSA's Trial 303, which debuted as a prototype last year. Considerable development went into this bike since its first showing, and one place that R&D work shows up is in the exhaust expansion chamber: It does double duty by also serving as part of the frame.

HARD CASH

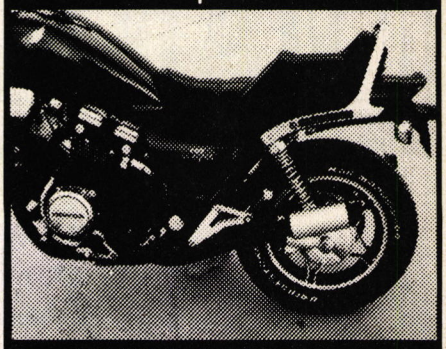
• The AMA now offers motorcycle insurance to its members. This new program, called AMA/Cycle-Gard, is written through the Criterion Insurance Company of Washington, D.C. Besides its blanket discount to all AMA members, AMA/Cycle-Gard tailors premiums to a rider's experience and riding record. Motorcy-

Continued

D&D
RACE PIPES



D & D "Factory" Race Pipes with Aluminum Silencers are designed for maximum horsepower. D & D was first with factory styled race pipes for the 750 Interceptor. The winner of the 1983 24 Hours of Nelson Ledges was equipped with D & D Race Pipes.



For 1984 D & D introduces pipes for the V-65 Magna, V-65 Sabre, 500, 750, and 1000 Interceptor. D & D 750 Interceptor Race Pipes produce 14 extra Horsepower.* Our new Baffle system gives you extra horsepower in just seconds. Remove just one bolt and the D & D Baffle slides right out with no hassle. Reinstall the Baffle in just seconds for a street quiet ride.

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* Rejetting Required
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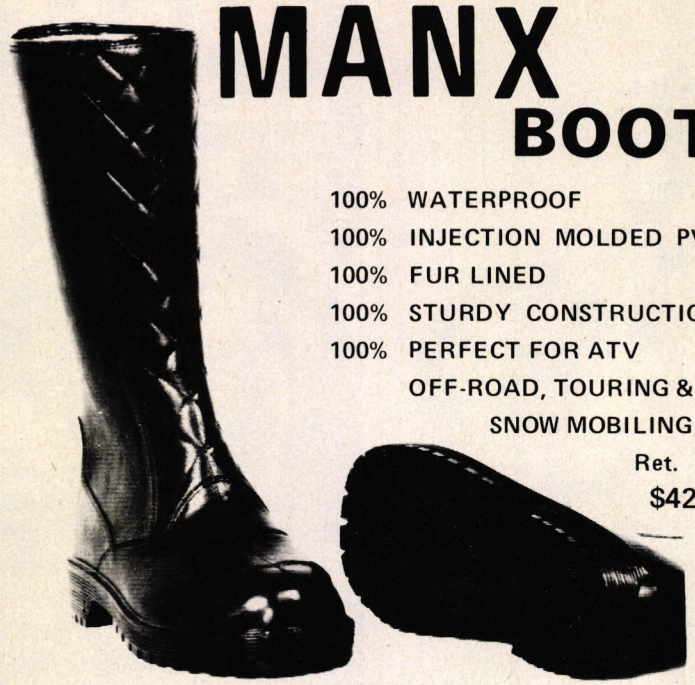
12 HP. Street Baffles Installed

MANX BOOTS



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130/90 x 16	62.47	
130/90 x 17	60.47	69.75
130/90 x 18	62.47	70.75
120/90 x 18	57.47	66.75
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110/90 x 18F&R	51.47	64.50
100/90 x 18RIB	47.97	66.50
110/90 x 18F		61.75
100/90 x 19F&R	51.97	
100/90 x 19RIB	51.97	60.75
110 x 19		64.75
100/90 x 16F	52.47	62.47
120/80 x 16F	53.47	63.47

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• California's Off-Highway Vehicle Recreation Commission, on the other hand, is faced with the problem of deciding how to spend its newfound money. $21.5 million has been returned to the commission's coffer, OHV "green stickie" fees borrowed to balance last year's state budget. Now the commission is wading through a stack of proposals submitted by the Bureau of Land Management, the U.S. Forest Service and cities and counties throughout the state. Only six of those OHV-recreation projects, however, have been earmarked for possible funding from the returned $21.5 million. The remaining 42 proposals would require an additional $11.25 million to finance. Any of the project ideas submitted, which include improvements to existing off-road riding areas and the establishment of some new ones, first require approval from the OHV Commission before being forwarded to the state legislature.

• According to the Motorcycle Retailers of America (a trade association), Honda's marketing plans for its hot-selling ATCs might not include Honda motorcycle dealers. The trade group reports that Honda's thinking is that motorcycle dealers might not be able to adequately service the growing ATC business. The report further states that Honda management believes ATCs are a distraction in motorcycle showrooms, and can best be sold by mass merchandisers such as Sears and K-Mart. The Motorcycle Retailers of America hardly agrees. The organization claims ATC sales are no different from sales of generators or other Honda power products. This issue is far from closed.

• Harley-Davidson is on the verge of receiving a few prestige-building sales orders. The California Highway Patrol, after 10 years on other brands of two-wheelers, could be making the switch back to Harley. And the CHP isn't the only law enforcement agency considering the new Harleys, either. The Los Angeles Police Department, which actually has a larger motorcycle fleet than does the CHP, is currently considering Harley's new FXRP, as well.

• In an attempt to increase motorcycle sales in the U.S., Harley-Davidson has entered into a retail sales agreement with Ford Motor Credit Co. Ford's North American Automotive Financing Operation will administer the Harley-Davidson account, and Harley dealers will have access to all 141 of Ford's vehicle sales finance branches.

Harley has been working on this agreement with Ford for some time, and the entire H-D model line will be eligible for the financing plan. Interest rates will vary from state to state, with payment terms ranging up to 36 months.

Continued

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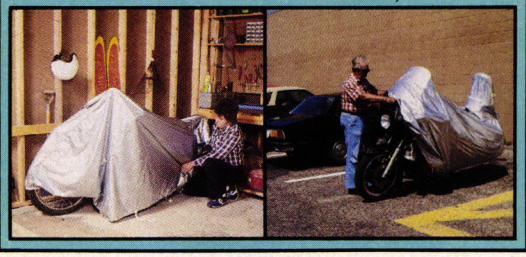

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New Life For Triumph

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• Triumph Motorcycles Ltd. is back in business, and it isn't because of Harley-Davidson, Cagiva or Enfield of India. Those companies all had shown an interest in the star-crossed British bike builder, but during negotiations between liquidators of the Meriden cooperative and potential buyers *inside* the motorcycle industry, English millionaire John Bloor stepped in from the *outside* with the ready cash. He walked off owning the Triumph name and all manufacturing rights to Triumph bikes dating back to 1940.

Bloor made his money in farming, finance and heavy-equipment production, and his total motorcycle involvement to this point consists of once having owned a Triumph Thunderbird.

He pointed out that sentimentality had nothing to do with the purchase. "We have not entered into this because we have a soft spot for Triumph. We're not going off half-cocked. If we can't get a bike right we'll chuck the whole idea out the window." His is a straightforward business venture.

And the first order of business is to get Triumph back into production as quickly as possible. Bloor has set up a five-year manufacturing license with the British firm Racing Spares of Newton Abbot, Devon. Racing Spares, with its own manufacturing facilities in Bedfordshire, has been in the British motorcycle-parts business for 20 years. The old Triumph's Meriden cooperative was one of its customers. Les Harris, Racing Spares' owner, already has his company ready to start producing 20 bikes per week. Initial production will be a kick-start version of the T140 Bonneville 750. Within 24 hours of the announcement of the new Triumph Motorcycles Ltd., Harris had received orders for 500 bikes, mostly from dealers in Europe and Canada.

Bloor and Harris say they are encouraged by the quick response but they're moving carefully, nonetheless. "We are not going to rush and put a bike on the market until we've got it right," Harris said. Racing Spares has hired Brian Jones,Triumph's former chief engineer, and will first make what it feels are some needed improvements to the British twin, including updates to the brakes, fork and engine. As an example, the new Triumph's engine—as built by Racing Spares—will use alloy barrels with chrome liners. But even with scheduled changes, Harris said T140 Bonnevilles will be in the showrooms by early summer. Other models, such as electric-start bikes, the eight-valve TSS and the 600cc Daytona, could follow. Prices haven't been announced but they should reflect a considerable reduction from past figures.

"Triumph was losing almost 400 pounds on every bike it built. Admittedly, I'm in this business because of my love of motorcycles, but I have to make a profit at it, too. And with our manufacturing methods, which aren't anything like theirs were, we should be able to do it," Harris said.

For the long-term success of Triumph Motorcycles, however, Bloor is pinning his hopes on the 900cc Diana engine, the liquid-cooled, DOHC, eight-valve, four-port twin that Triumph had been working on with Weslake Engines. Since Weslake itself is now in receivership, Bloor acquired the manufacturing

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The mighty Suzuki GS1100ED was so well received by the editors of *Cycle World*, they couldn't help calling it the Superbike of the Year for 1983. And considering the 1100's enormous power and precise handling, it's easy to see why.

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The Sensation of Suzuki.

patterns for the new engine and has set up a separate R&D shop in the outskirts of Coventry. Triumph planned to have six development engines by Christmas '83, with work on a new-design transmission to start after the new year. But it will be two to three years before actual production of the liquid-cooled Triumph can begin, Bloor estimates. Concerns with profitability explain the delay. "It wouldn't be worth our while to make just a few bikes a week," he said.

While Bloor concentrates his efforts on new technology, and Les Harris, Racing Spares and Jones take care of the present production needs, it seems that questions about Triumph finally are resolved. Of course, the entire project could go down in flames, as Bloor himself has warned. But Bloor is a businessman with a strong track record and whose vision isn't clouded with sentiment. Racing Spares, for its part, has two decades of success in the British motorcycle-parts manufacturing business. It's a combination that could work.

"People were telling me 20 years ago that British motorcycles were finished," Harris said. "I didn't believe them then and I don't believe them now. The British twin is still a strong bike." That optimism now faces its biggest test. *—Joe Kress*

FEDERAL CASES

• According to the Motorcycle Safety Foundation, motorcycles make up just 3.3 percent of all motor vehicles registered in the U.S.; but they're involved in 10.3 percent of the highway-accident deaths reported. Despite these figures, only 0.16 percent of available federal funds is spent on motorcycle safety projects. Section 402 of the 1966 Highway Safety Act provides for the funding of state-run traffic-safety programs, which could include motorcycle-safety projects. But a 1982 across-the-board cut has sharply curtailed the spending of any of those 402 funds on motorcycle safety. In fact, the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) didn't even include motorcycles in its priority-spending list for the year. As a result, during all of 1982 only $1.6 million in 402 funds went toward motorcycle safety. Furthermore, the number of states *applying* for the federal money dropped from 41 to 23.

• Instead of relying on the federal budget to pay for two-wheel safety projects, the Motorcycle Safety Foundation works to help set up state-financed programs. These usually are funded by a slight increase in either motorcycle-license or registration fees. So far, 15 states have passed legislation to allow this type of funding, with Oregon being the latest. Oregon HB2880 transfers $170,000 from a defunct public-school driver-ed program into a separate account of the Oregon State Traffic Safety Commission. That account, which will be further funded by an increase in Oregon's motorcycle license and renewal fee, will pay for this state-run motorcycle safety course.

• The state of Washington also has its own motorcycle safety program now, administered through that state's Department of Licensing. The Washington program will certify all instruction sites and teachers, supervise and provide financial assistance for the motorcycle safety courses. The Washington Motorcycle Safety Program, which has only recently gotten under way, was originally established by legislation passed in 1982.

• Three other states have similar programs pending. In Massachusetts, HB2202 would finance a motorcycle safety project through a $2 increase in the state's existing motorcycle-registration fee. Pennsylvania's HB1344 would raise that state's motorcycle-license fee by $2 to pay for a rider safety course. Additionally, anyone under 18 who wants a Pennsylvania bike license would first have to complete the course. And in Louisiana, HB607 will be reintroduced during the '84 session. That bill would add $2 to the rider's license fee to set up a state-funded safety course.

• On another front, almost two dozen bills in state legislatures across the country would make headphone use while riding motorcycles illegal. Until now, though, there have been no studies that either prove or disprove

Continued

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One Test Ride On The New Harley FXRT Sold The

Chuck Irwin

Pictured here is Mr. Chuck Irwin, the founder and ex-president of the Suzuki owners group, with his new motorcycle, the 1984 Harley-Davidson® FXRT Sport Glide.™

Last summer, he challenged Harley-Davidson to a direct comparison of the new Harley FXRT and the Suzuki GS 1100G.

For 3,000 miles he rode, testing our new V² Evolution™ engine, our new anti-dive suspension and our new wind tunnel designed fairing. He tested the new braking, the ride and the handling. He watched the new V-Twin for oil leaks. And there were none. He watched for maintenance problems. And there were none.

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President Of The Suzuki Owners' Club. Now It's Your Turn.

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Chuck Irwin bought the new Harley FXRT to replace his GS 1100. He resigned his position as president of the Suzuki Owners Club. His conclusion to the Suzuki faithful was simply, "I rode the machine with an open mind... have you?"

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allegations that headphones present a safety problem by impairing a rider's hearing. A recent Action Report from the AMA, however, reports the conclusions of a study done by the Society of Automotive Engineers (SAE). The SAE tested two groups of riders, one with headphones mounted in their helmets and one without the headphones, for their ability to hear traffic sounds. The test found that both sets of riders could detect the sound and direction of an emergency-vehicle's siren, although there were certain "audio masking" problems in the group using headphones. The SAE noted, however, that a special filter can be incorporated into the headphones to enhance the rider's ability to detect traffic sounds—without significantly reducing the audio quality of the headphone set.

• Drag Specialties, a manufacturer of aftermarket parts and accessories, is battling an influx of foreign-made replicas of its products. The company has filed suit in the U.S. District Court of Minneapolis, alleging patent infringment and the marketing of parts that appear to be Drag Specialties products when in fact they aren't. Named as defendants are a parts and accessories retailer, a California-based parts importer and the Ming Tar Factory Inc., a motorcycle-parts manufacturer with plants in Taiwan.

RUMORS

• With most of the predictions from last year now in the showrooms, the spy network has started some conjecture about '84½ intros. And Suzuki is one manufacturer that bears close watching. A few of that company's liquid-cooled GSX-series bikes already have been spotted around the streets of Southern California, so don't be too surprised to see these liquid-cooled, inline-four-powered sport machines join the lineup by mid-year. We've hinted at this possibility before.

• And on the legal beat it looks as if the motorcycle industry might borrow a page from the four-wheel fraternity to get around the hydrocarbon-emission level proposed by California's Air Resources Board (CARB). As you might remember, a one-gram-per-kilometer motorcycle-emission standard was to go into effect with the '84 model-year bikes. CARB postponed that requirement, after manufacturers pointed out the problems involved with the catalytic convertors that would be required to meet the standard. We've heard the answer could be fleet averaging, a plan that is based on the number of motorcycles sold by the manufacturer. The proposal is similar to what the auto makers use to meet federal fuel-mileage regulations. With fleet averaging, the motorcycle manufacturers would agree to make some models squeaky-clean and actually better the emission level set by CARB, if allowed to have a few bikes in the lineup that don't quite meet the emission requirement. The key here is that the *average* hydrocarbon emissions for the motorcycles sold doesn't exceed one gram per kilometer.

• Finally, although BMW has said all along that its new K100 inline-four won't be available in this country until late fall of this year, that could change. We've heard the company might do an about-face on the original schedule and bring the bikes into the U.S. as soon as early summer. Pressure from the company's single-brand dealers seems to be the reason; potential BMW buyers are keeping their wallets in their pockets waiting for the K100.

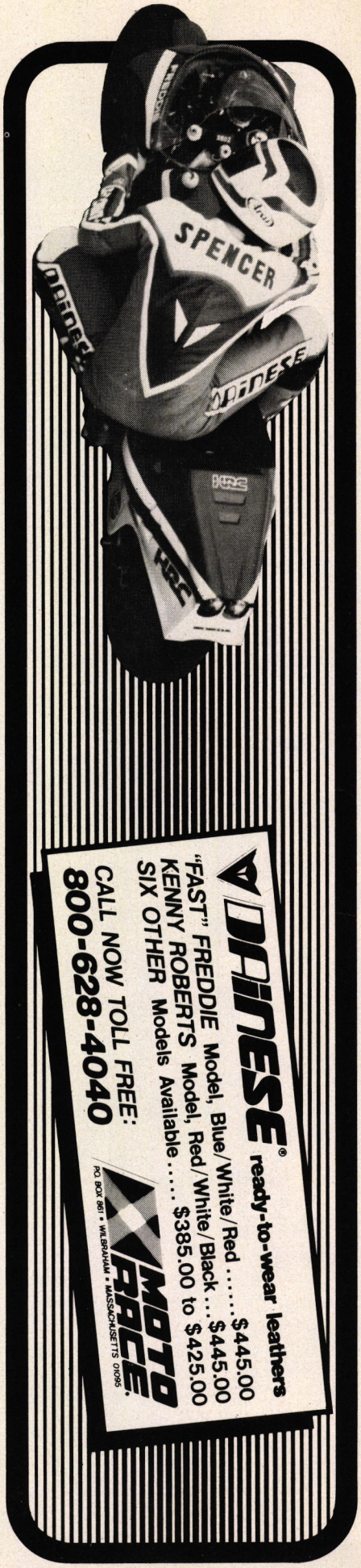
APART FROM THE CROWD

• Just when most of the country is under a cold-weather riding curfew, motorcycles are coming to the small screen. "Motorcycle World" with Larry Huffman, a half-hour televised motomagazine originally started in Los Angeles, is scheduled for national syndication. By February the show should be on the air in New York, Chicago, Atlanta, Dallas/Fort Worth, Philadelphia, Denver, Seattle/Tacoma, San Francisco and San Diego. The show's producers say Houston, Boston, Detroit, Washington D.C. and Cleveland will be tuning in soon.

• Another cold-weather motorcycle diversion is a restoration project. Now, thanks to the Soft Car Company (Box 28313, Tempe, Ariz. 85282), you can bring your Apple II computer right into the job. Soft Car's computer program, "Motorcycle Restoration Record," allows a restorer to file a complete bike history. All project information, such as parts and information sources, costs and other relevant data can be called up at the touch of the keyboard. The program also totals time and money spent, names, dates, pertinent specifications, shows entered and prizes won. About the only thing you *can't* call up on the program are some gnomes to go out in the garage and actually turn the wrenches.

• Okay street riders, here's your chance to show 'em how you bust berms and cut a fast trail. Songdog Ranch, a motorcycle-only campground north of Los Angeles, has just added dirtbike rentals to its activities list. The Songdog Ranch sits right at the mouth of a 7000-acre ORV park, with trails galore just waiting to be explored. Reservations can be made by calling (805) 766-2454, or by writing to the Songdog Ranch at P.O. Box 175, Cuyama Valley, Calif. 93254.

• International motorcycle expositions strive to put on a class act, but at this year's Milan show the organizers pulled out all the stops. Part of the show was an invitation-only art contest, "Two Wheels and the Art." Approximately 40 of Italy's better-known artists and illustrators were commissioned to submit entries, and a jury headed by art critic Alberico Sala picked the winner. That wasn't the artistic extent of things, because surrounding the contest was an exhibit of other original works and reproductions of famous paintings inspired by two-wheelers. Motorcycles are definitely moving uptown. ●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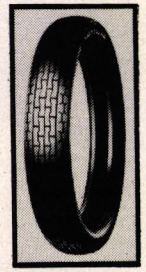

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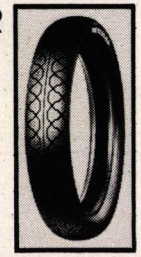

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F18	400/450x18	12.03
E19	325/350x19	10.95

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ME77 130/90H16 TT	79.95
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ME77 FRT 110/90V18 TT	76.18
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ME99A 120/90V18 TT	95.37
ME99A 130/80V18 TT	95.04
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ME99A 150/70V18 TT	99.95
ME11 325H19 TBL	74.13
ME77 350V19 TBL	78.76

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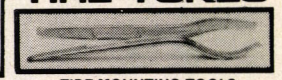

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RB2 3.50H18	45.25
RB2 3.25H19	46.25
RB2 3.50H19	48.25
TUBELESS	ADD 5.00

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TK44 130/90V17	68.25
TK44 4.00V18	66.25
TK44 4.25/85V18	66.25
TK44 130/90V18	68.25
TK22 110/90V18	59.25
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*Kerker trade name
**Supertrapp trade name.

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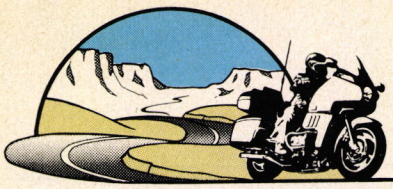


The Fuller-Dressers

Designer chic hits turn- key touring.

BY LARRY WORKS

PHOTOGRAPHY © 1984 VIC HUBER

Based on the size and complexity of turn-key tourers, you might have come to believe that these behemoths come ready-made with just about every conceivable accessory and filigree already bolted in place. That when the big-rigs roll off the assembly lines after a final systems-check, every single geegaw, gimcrack and bit of brightwork short of inside plumbing has been included. You might think that, quite simply, there's just no room for anything more. But nothing could be further from the triple-chromed truth.

There's a thriving artistic community out there, just waiting for the land yachts to hit the bricks—to *begin* the customizing process. To those moto-artists, the sheer size of a full-dresser just means that the size of the canvas they have to work with is a little bigger, that's all. And those avid customizers have seized upon the turn-key bikes like Christo measuring up an island for a few miles of pink taffeta.

Until recently, all that redressing of dressers was pretty much the province of the aftermarket. The OE manufacturers were concentrating on building things *into* their tourers, not adding them on. But as we found out in our test of the turn-key bikes, three of the four manufacturers - Harley-Davidson, Honda and Yamaha - now offer extensive collections of optional add-ons to provide a personalized finishing touch. And as you'll see, in some cases those touches add up to more than moderate styling licks: They're nothing less than massive visual redesign.

The fascinating part is that most of these options make little or no pretense to function. They're purely for style—an exterior decor group, as it were. And since those bits exist not for what they do but for what they look like, we won't be making any value judgments here. Art, after all, is mostly a question of personal preference. And make no mistake about it; what follows is nothing short of art.

Continued

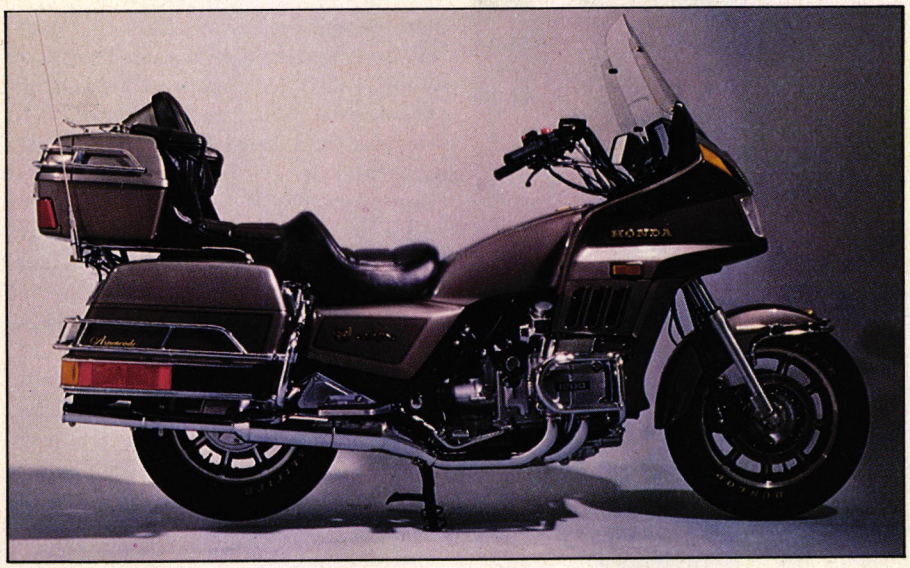
Harley-Davidson FLTC

Where it all began.

• If you're looking for the origin of moto-fashion from an OE manufacturer, look no further. Harley-Davidson not only popularized bolt-on moto-style, its original designs established the trends that other manufacturers either copied outright, or at least considered, in designing their own two-wheel fashion.

All the bolt-on chrome—from the saddlebag light bars to the chrome trim pieces on the bags and travel trunk to the clustered running lights on the tail-section—seem familiar beyond their use on Harleys alone. And well they should; those shapes and designs are the origin of "full-dress," and they've become ubiquitous by their adoption by other manufacturers. Even the fender rail should be familiar. Though it's original equipment on the FLTC and other dresser Harleys, it's been emulated by a host of accessory firms, and the presence of similar fender rails in the styling kits of both Honda and Yamaha is no accident.

This FLT is wearing $503.75 worth of passenger floorboards, a light bar, tail-section running lights and chromed covers for both the starter and transmission. As moto-art, all of Harley's styling options are original; the other manufacturers are simply producing unsigned copies of the Old Master's work.



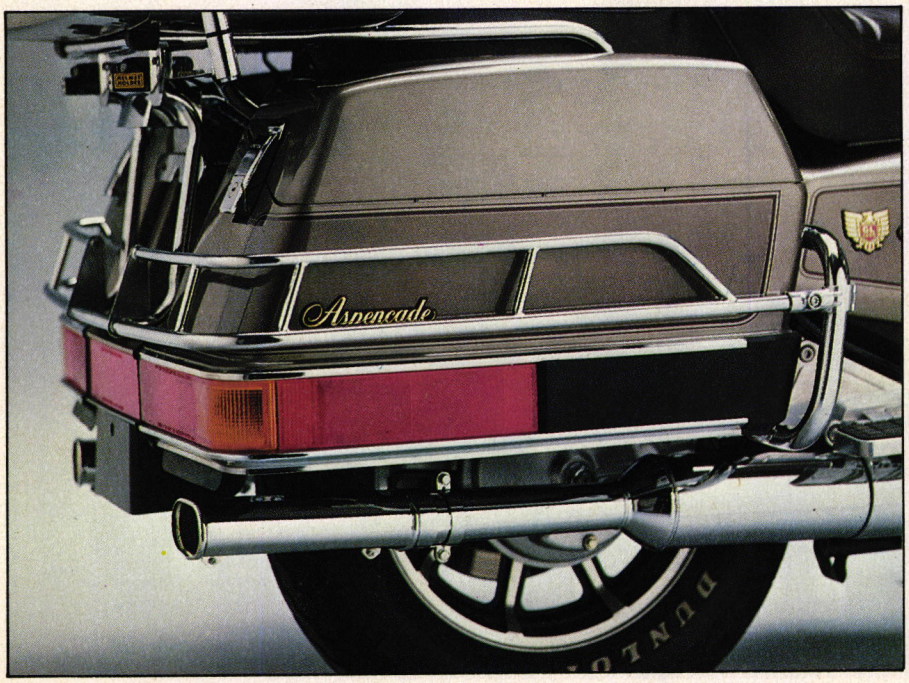
Honda Aspencade

Restyling done without the broad brush.

• Amplification of existing lines, not wholesale visual revamping, is the intent behind the Hondaline styling options for the Aspencade. Each piece is muted filigree added to augment the basic shapes already built into the bike.

As a result of the rigid adherence to the Aspencade's original lines, the six-piece set blurs the distinction between added-on decoration and the original bars and chrome. The simple lines of the trim parts, the front fender rail, the saddlebag and tour trunk trim rails, the trunk rack and the exhaust pipe extensions, integrate naturally with the basic shapes of the bodywork, yet still impart a classic, somewhat rounded look, to the angular shapes of the Aspencade.

By virtue of its understatement, the full $235.40 Hondaline styling group is not in the same category as the Royale's total rebuild, though it might be regarded as the starting point in a full-on aftermarket customization. As an end in itself, the Hondaline pieces can be considered as insider stuff, the kind of sprucing-up that goes unnoticed except at rallies and group rides, since probably only another Gold Winger will be able to tell how—and why—the bike looks different.



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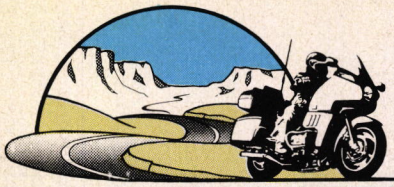
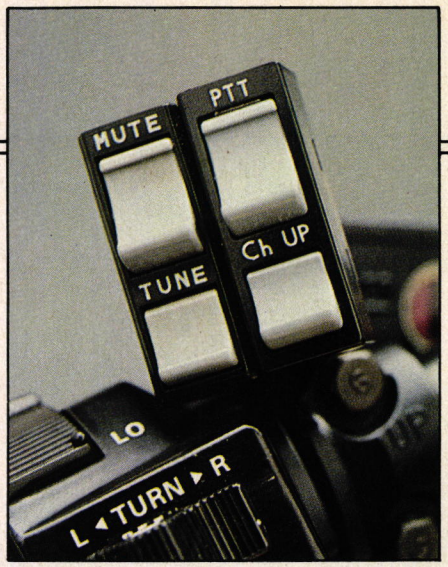
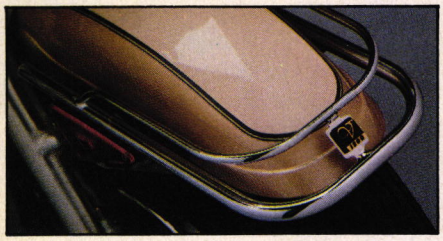


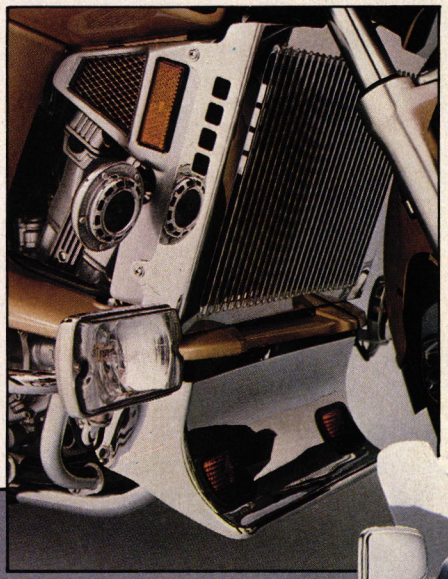
Yamaha Venture Royale

The no-holds-barred look.



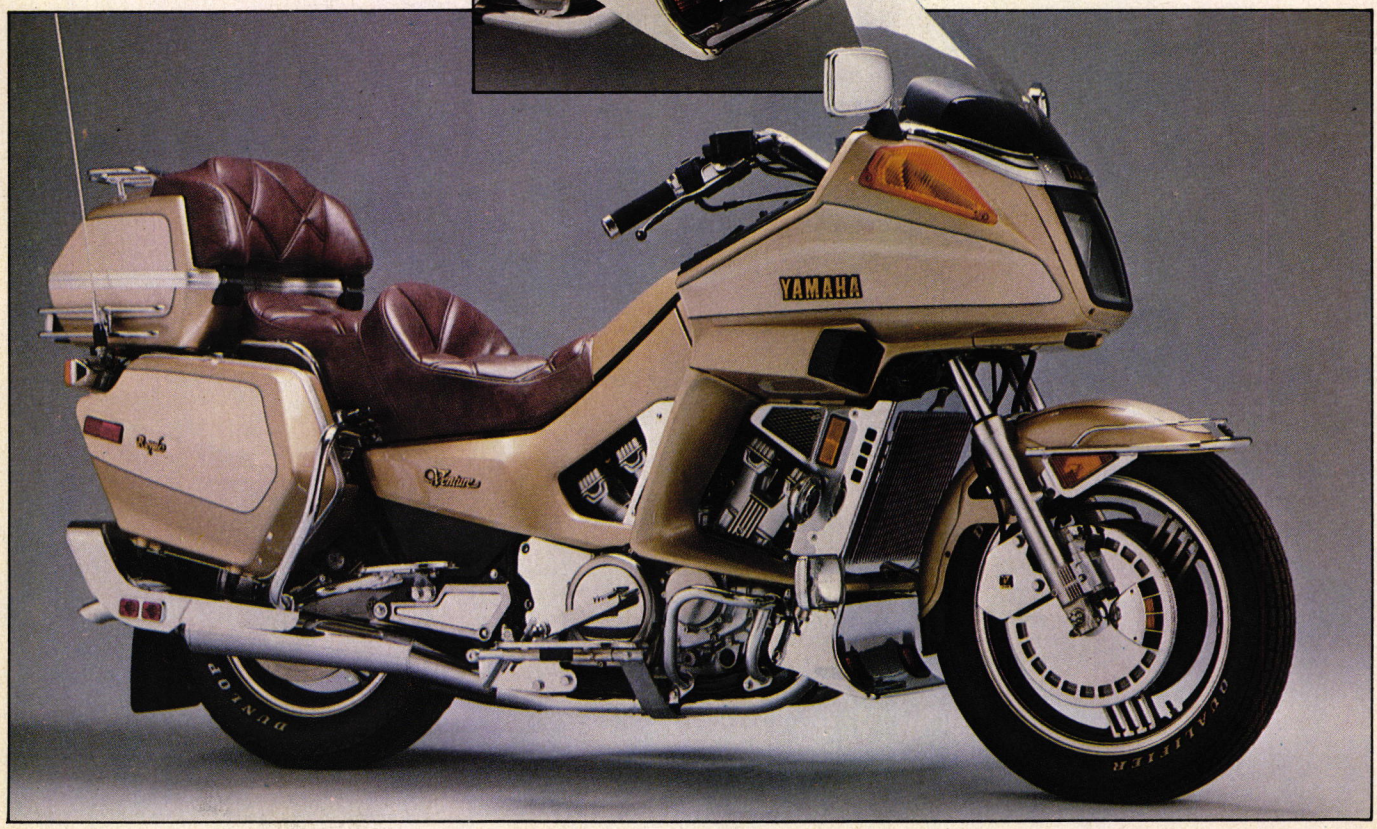
• It's a quantum leap in fashion from the other collections to what's available for the Venture Royale. The full treatment not only radically alters the look of the bike but, by virtue of jutting floorboards that limit ground clearance and a heel-and-toe shifter, has an effect on performance characteristics as well. The entire group, called the Venture Line Custom Accessories, is manufactured to Yamaha's specifications by Drag Specialties, and is available only through Yamaha dealers.





Virtually no major component of the Royale has been overlooked in this massive facelift, which includes bolt-ons that modify the fenders, exhaust pipes, brakes, engine bay, saddlebags and travel trunk. The look is not traditional full-dress but rather Rocket-Boy futuristic, and the liberally applied brightwork ends up turning the full-boat Royale into a stylized showboat, replete with driving lights, running lights and enough shiny stuff to tie up a year's worth of production for a Rhodesian chromium mine.

All that glitter requires a serious desire on the part of the owner to have a personalized Royale, though—as well as an open pocketbook. Undoubtedly, most Royales will not get the dressed-to-the-nines treatment. Those that do will be wearing $1847.95 of moto-fashion. •



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Then there's the sheer beauty of these sleek fiberglass helmets. The Star LTD in glistening black and anthracite, the Magnum LTD in shining black, white and anthracite. Not only do *they* look great, but they make you look great, too.

Finally, it's comforting to know both helmets are the result of 29 years of learning—not just from the mouths of researchers, but from the heads of racers.

It's the kind of learning that's made Bell the leading manufacturer of helmets in the world, and the number one choice among racers today.

So consider the Star LTD and the Magnum LTD. And travel first class.

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We've taken V-twin technology and added something new.

Honda technology.

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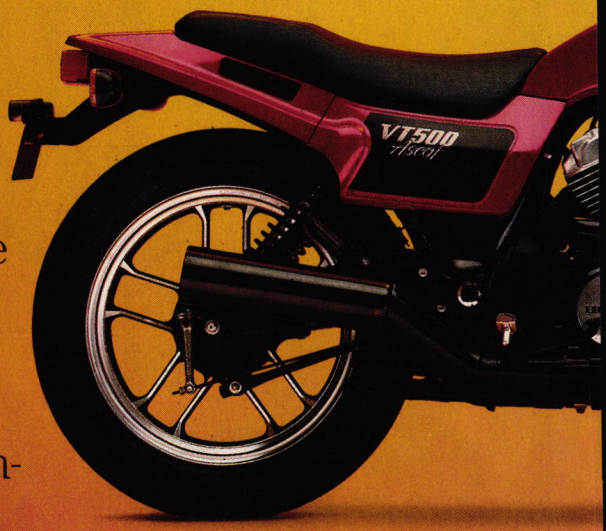
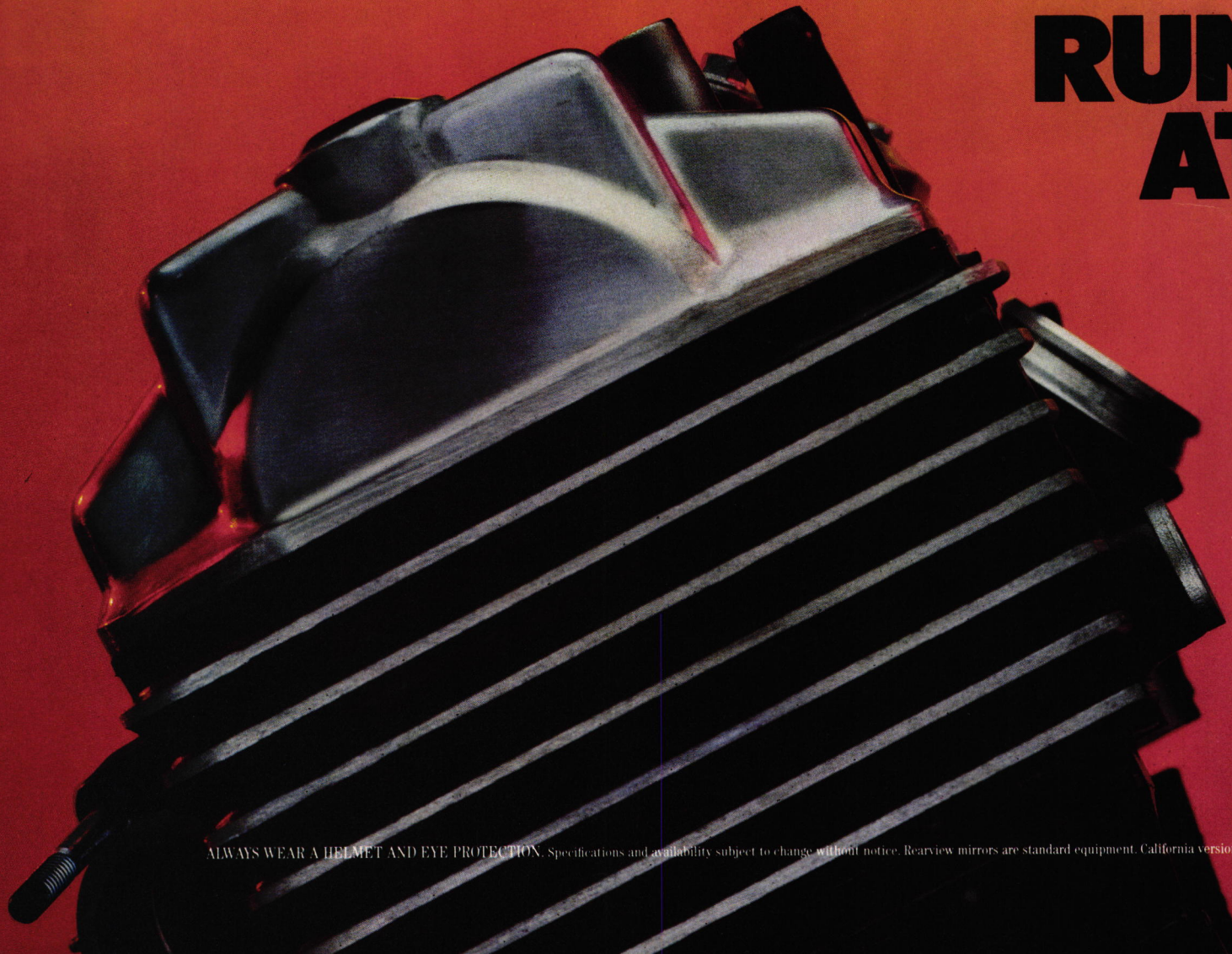


RUN
AT



ALWAYS WEAR A HELMET AND EYE PROTECTION. Specifications and availability subject to change without notice. Rearview mirrors are standard equipment. California version diffe

That gives you the low-end torque. The horsepower. The deep, rumbling exhaust that's music to the ears.

The VT500 Ascot gives you a close-ratio five-speed transmission—with overdrive sixth. Shaft drive. ComCast™ wheels. Plus air-adjustable front suspension.

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A bike that's at home on city streets. Country lanes. A tight canyon road.

Honda's VT500 Ascot. Because high performance is a matter of degrees.

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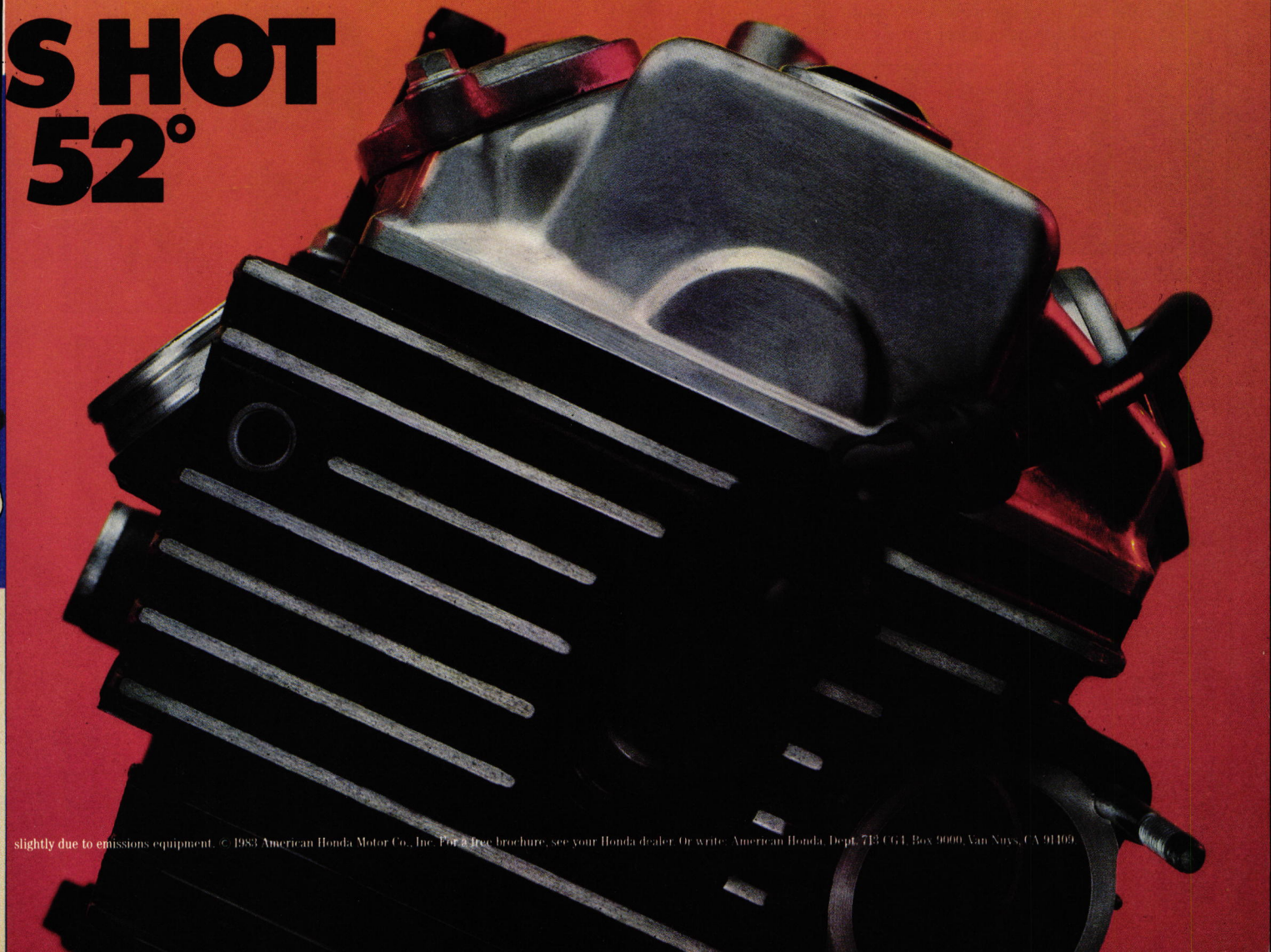
FOLLOW THE LEADER

S HOT 52°



slightly due to emissions equipment. © 1983 American Honda Motor Co., Inc. For a free brochure, see your Honda dealer. Or write: American Honda, Dept. 713-CG, Box 9000, Van Nuys, CA 91409.

ROAD TEST:

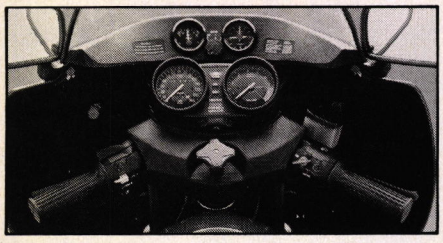
BMW R100RS

Staid? Somewhat.
Dated? Rather.
Esoteric? Decidedly.
Dull? Never.

• It's a simple fact that not everyone wants to do the Interstate Drone when they go touring. Instead, some of us would rather find solitary backroads where we can travel at, say, something in excess of the double-nickel. In short, sport-touring.

And at first glance, BMW's R100RS, the archetypal sport-tourer, seems like just the ticket for such a venture. The wind-tunnel-designed fairing, for instance, suggests an elegant, high-speed passage through the countryside, unruffled by drafts or turbulence, while the softish suspension promises a cushy ride over secondary roads.

Place the RS in its element and you'll find the bike makes good on those promises.



R100RS cockpit is tidy and uncluttered

And surrounded by a superb fairing.

The fairing provides extraordinarily good protection, better even than that of the fairings on some heavyweight touring bikes. Only the rider's head and shoulders get any direct wind blast, and he can prevent that by tucking in tighter. Tucking in also reduces the wind roar and keeps your faceshield clean; otherwise the noise becomes excessive and the screen funnels bugs and road grit into your face. Regardless of the rider's position, though, there's virtually no buffeting.

The suspension also performs excellently under most circumstances. On choppy surfaces, the RS soaks up bumps and holes with ease, and only freeway expansion joints upset the smooth ride. That's doubly impressive, considering the suspension is adjustable only for spring preload (three positions) in the rear, and that the spring and damping rates haven't changed since the RS's introduction in 1976.

Nor has the rest of the motorcycle changed significantly since it was intro-

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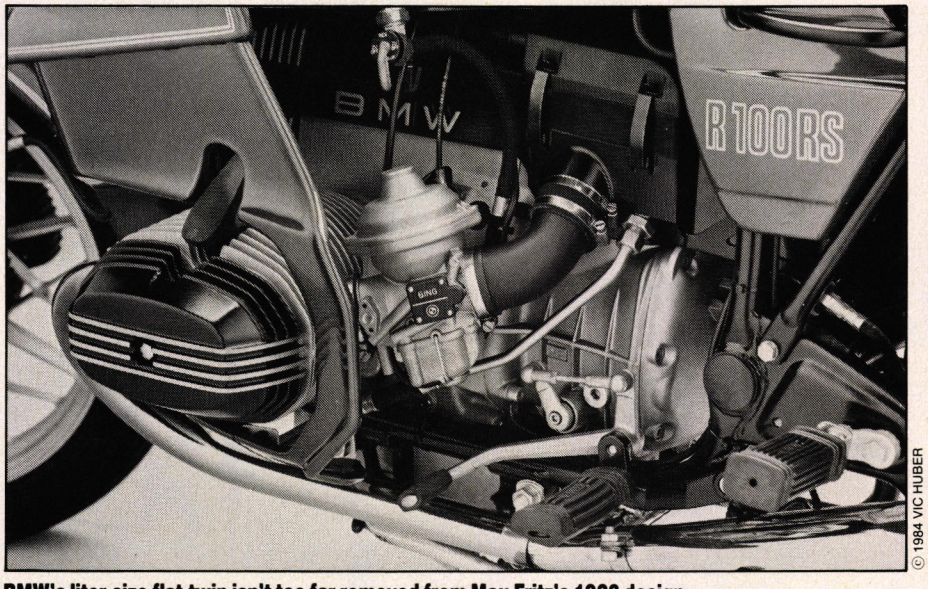


© 1984 VIC HUBER

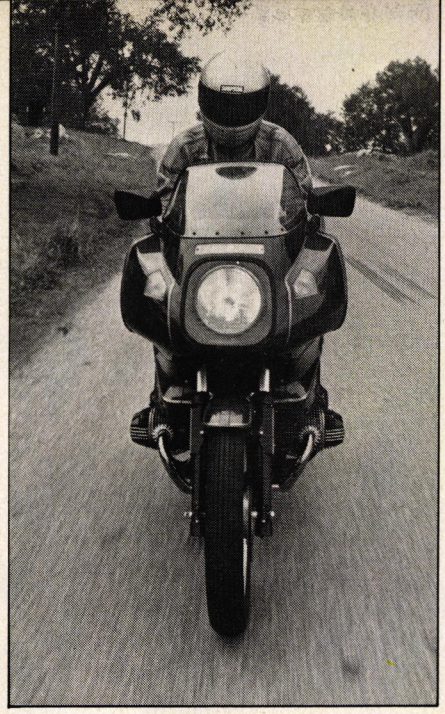
BMW's liter-size flat-twin isn't too far removed from Max Fritz's 1923 design

When something works, you don't fix it.

duced eight years ago. True, BMW's flat-twin engine has been refined over the years, but not fundamentally altered. Despite the motor's refinements, the R100RS isn't as quick as other literbikes, but the opposed-twin's power is always available at almost any engine speed or throttle opening. There's some vibration present in the grips and pegs at most rpm, but, curiously enough, the bike is smoothest near 55 mph.

A few things about the RS's sport-touring performance, though, will nibble away at the rider's peace of mind. The bike is stable at speed, true, but is slightly sensitive to crosswinds and lacks the rock-solid feeling that's supposed to be part of a European sport-tourer. And although the RS offers good legroom and has one of the finest saddles in motorcycling, the handlebar is too low and much too narrow for long-term comfort. The riding position places a great deal of weight on the wrists and hands, and that, combined with the stiff throttle-pull, will have most riders sore and aching before the 6.1-gallon tank goes on reserve.

That low, narrow handlebar also is partly responsible for the RS's reluctance to turn. The bike will hold its line through a corner, but the high-effort steering forces you to set up early for the turn, and makes even a relaxed sport-touring pace seem strenuous. Plus, the amount of shaft-induced jacking requires that shifting and braking be done before peeling off into a corner.



All of which makes BMW's R100RS less than a complete success as a 1984-model sport-tourer. Dedicated BMW loyalists don't view the bike's traits necessarily as shortcomings, though; rather, they see them as qualities that distinguish the RS from other motorcycles. And the fact that the K100-series BMWs will soon replace the existing R100 line stands to make the RS even more desirable to a select few.

BMW R100RS

IMPORTER: BMW of North America Inc.
BMW Plaza
Montvale, New Jersey 07645

Category	sport-touring
Suggested retail price	$6900
Engine type	four-stroke horizontally opposed twin
Valve arrangement	pushrod-operated overhead valves
Bore and stroke	94.0mm x 70.6mm
Displacement	979.9cc
Compression ratio	8.2:1
Carburetion	two 40mm Bing constant-vacuum
Gearbox	5-speed
Front fork/wheel travel	BMW, 36mm stanchion tube diameter/7.0 in. (177mm)
Rear shocks/wheel travel	dual Boge shocks, 3-position adjustable spring preload/5.2 in. (131mm)
Wheelbase	58.6 in. (1489mm)
Seat height	32.3 in. (817mm)
Weight	495 lbs. (224.5kg)
Best ¼-mile acceleration	13.172 sec., 100.11 mph (161 km/h)
Top speed (observed)	125 mph (210 km/h)
Stopping distance from 60 mph	148 ft. (45.1m)
Fuel consumption	27 to 50 mpg (11 to 21 km/l)
Warranty	36 months, unlimited mileage
Available colors	Graphite; Alaska Blue

For riders who don't share those sentiments, however, the RS is liable to seem slow, quirky and uncomfortable. That's not overly surprising, considering the R100RS has managed to sidestep nearly eight years of moto-evolution. Admittedly, in its day, the RS was the benchmark by which sport-tourers were judged. But this is 1984, and by present-day standards, the R100RS doesn't measure up. —*Charles Everitt*

NEW! JARDINE POWER FOR GOLD WINGS

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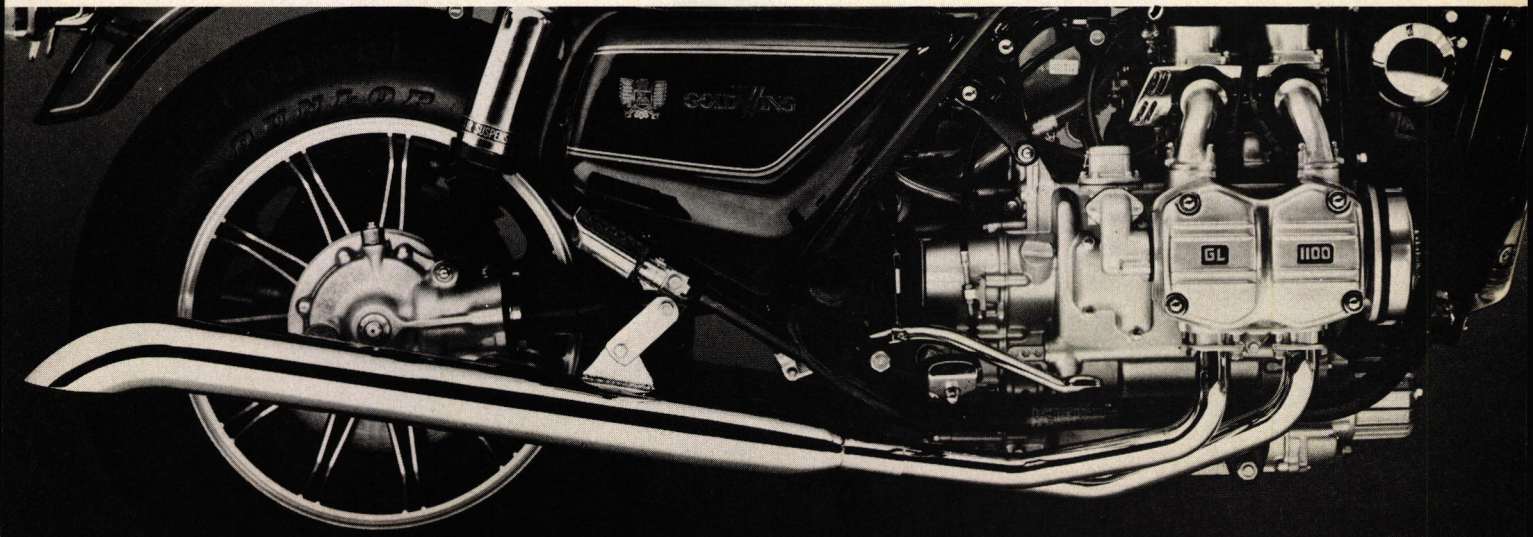


Venture owners love to toot its horn.

A little over a year ago, nobody'd even heard of the Yamaha Venture.

Now it's all you hear about in touring circles. And the people singing its praises loudest are the ones who know best.

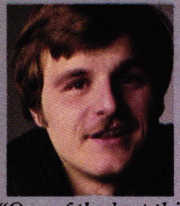
The owners.

So we thought, who'd be better to tell you about the Venture? About how we built it from scratch, just for touring. And how that shows up in the riding.

"The hydraulic clutch is smooth, smooth, smooth."
Modelle Jonkins

"It has a better stereo than most cars."
Curt Dennin

"It handles better and feels lighter than my old 750."
Ken Norland



"One of the best things is the anti-dive. It keeps the front end under control."
David Queener

"You just touch the button and the engine is running. At cruising speed it's still loafing."
Curt Dennin

"It feels much torquier in the seat of your pants."
Gary Carter

"The power is always there when you need it."
Phil Fermo

For instance, its 1200cc, 16-valve, liquid-cooled, V-4 is so strong it hardly notices whether you're one-up or two.

Its suspension takes on any route you choose, curvy or bumpy, smooth or straight. And you can adjust the Venture Royale's ride to the road and load right from the cockpit.

And for '84 we gave it the first computer-operated cruise control ever on a touring bike. And we made 15 refinements, like a windshield that's taller and brake pads that are longer wearing.

And we... wait a minute. This is supposed to be the owners' ad.

Let them tell it.

YAMAHA

Built for the fun of it.™

"It's so quiet behind this fairing, it's much easier to tell Gary what to do."
Vania Carter

"I can see why they didn't put drainholes in the luggage. The seal is perfect."
Gary Carter

"I'm a big guy and the suspension never bottoms out. It lets me really boogie in the corners."
Phil Fermo

"The seat's so comfortable my wife dozes off sometimes."
Bill Meredith

"You can't shift it badly. It won't clunk or jerk. And they've done their homework on the shaft drive. There's no slack in the drivetrain."
Gordon Schloatman

"Another excellent thing: the bike won't go with the kickstand down."
Bob Rea

2-year/24,000 miles warranty. Warranty terms are limited. See your Yamaha dealer for details. (Accessories — 1-year warranty.) Always wear a helmet and eye protection.

PRODUCT EVALUATION:

Fox XKMR Radar Detector

Evening the microwave odds.

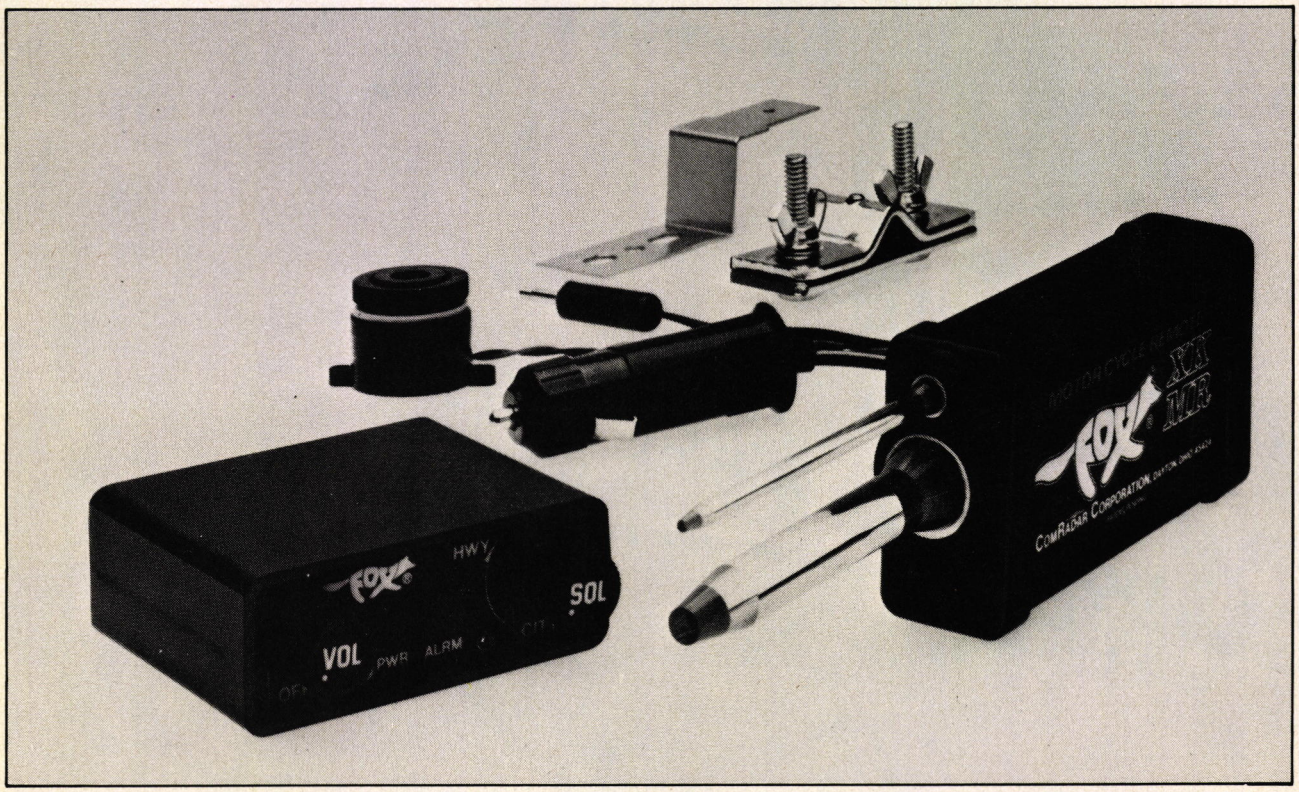
• Despite booming sales in radar detectors, manufacturers have been slow to market devices tailored for motorcycles. Given that few highway users have a greater need for radar warning receivers than do motorcyclists, this is ironic indeed. Today's motorcyclists, after all, not only have the widest selection of high-speed hardware ever assembled on the planet, they also have a problem in "exposure" to radar that cars don't—that of "mistaken identity." (See "Riding the Radar Range," May 1979.) All of this was made dramatically clear to ComRadar Inc. when it introduced its Fox XKMR synchronous ("passive") radar detector at the Chicago Consumer Electronics Show in early 1983. The units at the show sold out in a few days, an indication ComRadar perhaps attributes to its reputation in the microwave marketplace, but that is more likely simply an indication of the huge unmet need in the motorcycle end of that market.

Not that the XKMR isn't a tantalizing piece of equipment for any motorcyclist. When you lay out your $199.95 (through retail outlets only) for ComRadar's solution to highway harassment, you get an X- and K-band microwave receiver (10.525 GHz and 24.150 GHz, respectively), a signal processor/control module, a piezo buzzer, all necessary wiring for installation through a lighter socket, two types of mounting brackets, and velcro strips to aid mounting. An operator's manual and a two-page flier describing mounting options also are included, as is a lifetime guarantee for the original purchaser.

In reading the manual it becomes obvious that the XKMR is hardly a clean-sheet-of-paper solution to the motorcyclist's need. Rather, it's an evolutionary modification of the basic Fox radar detector ComRadar has been building for nearly a decade. Further investigation reveals that, while the receiver is weather- and vibration-proofed, the "control module," which houses the on/off/volume and sensitivity switches, is not. In fact, the XKMR is virtually identical to the remote unit designed for automobile use. Only the mounting hardware, piezo buzzer and extra wire to drive the host machine's turnsignals or horn as extra-noticeable warnings differentiate the MR from the XKRW.

In the final analysis, of course, performance, not the lineage of the equipment, is all that matters. And in radar detectors meant for motorcycles, that boils down to two questions: Can it be well and easily mounted; and once mounted, will it do its job?

The test XKMR was fitted to a BMW R100RS within an hour of opening the box. Most of the hour was devoted to routing the hard-wired line that replaced the standard cigarette-lighter plug shipped with the unit, and following directions in the manual that call for the installation of a one-amp fuse in the power line. Mounting the receiver and control module proved no problem on the RS; the receiver simply snapped into the Z-bracket supplied, which itself snugged up nicely under the right-side headlight bolt, providing a straight field of view for the twin Lucite antennas. The control module was a little more difficult to locate, since the warning light had to be visible, but the supplied velcro allowed mounting the module under the left turnsignal housing. Likewise, two strips of velcro secured the piezo buzzer under the starboard turnsignal box. All wiring between the units was simple and straightforward.



XKMR installation is simple and straightforward, and bracketry provides a variety of mounting options on a wide range of bikes

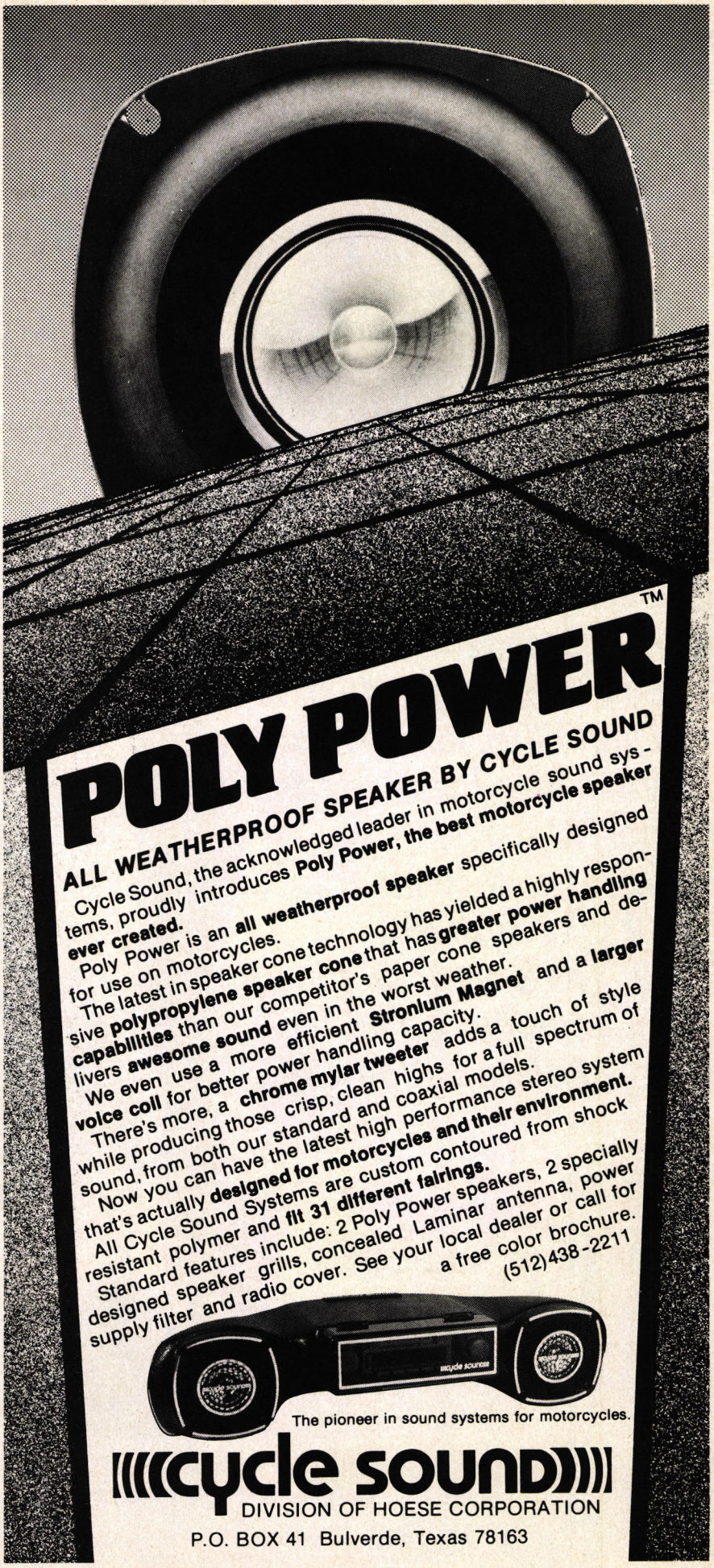
An hour's worth of work gives long-term smokey insurance.

In 60 days of testing across 3000 miles of riding from Virginia to Vermont, the Fox proved that its *raison d'etre*—screaming bloody murder when some trooper intent on revenue-building aimed a microwave gun anywhere in the vicinity—was born out by its performance. It was tested against the latest Escort superheterodyne receiver and, predictably, the Escort put the XKMR in the weeds in terms of advance warning of surveillance, and also of identification of what type of radar was being transmitted. However, comparing the two is a little unfair, because the Escort's signals were almost inaudible and invisible in the motorcycle's environment, and especially because the superheterodyne nature of the Escort put it one whole technological—and financial—shelf up on the XKMR. The Escort's use in this test was solely to act as a measure of the effectiveness of the XKMR.

And the Fox unit *was* effective. Tuning the sensitivity control as suggested by the manual resulted in few spurious alerts, and when they were genuine, the warbling scream of the piezo was unmistakable, allowing the rider enough time to react—as long as the reaction was immediate.

That requirement for immediate action, along with the undifferentiated warnings for both X- and K-band, is the Achilles heel of the XKMR. Even with the upgrades given the basic Fox over the years, the fact is that no passive detector is up to the standards of a superhet unit, and as electronic traps grow more sophisticated, passive units will grow more and more handicapped.

There is no doubt that further enhancement will occur, in this unit and others, nor is there any doubt that other manufacturers will start catering to the bike market. Meanwhile, the fundamental question regarding the Fox XKMR is whether it is a worthwhile addition. A motorcyclist might reasonably consider waiting until some motorcycle-targeted superhet unit is marketed. It's a tempting idleness, but unwise; the Fox XKMR works, it's available right now, and its mounting system allows it to fit a wide variety of machinery. The Fox unit is not the best radar detector you can buy, but simply the best combination of features for a motorcyclist—today. Tomorrow will be another story, but in electronic countermeasures for highway harassment there is no payback for waiting too long, whereas the payback for spending nearly $200 for an XKMR can come the hour after it's mounted. For further information, contact: ComRadar Corporation, Dept. CC, 4518 Taylorsville Road, Dayton, Ohio 45425. 1-800-543-789 —*Steve Thompson*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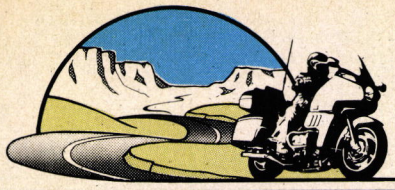

MOTO-FI

Now for a little traveling music.

BY DANIEL SWEENEY

Motorcycle stereos have always been kind of a sour note; good enough to take some of the lonesome out of the long, lonesome highway, but not nearly as sophisticated as either car or home sound systems. But over the past few years, motorcycle high fidelity—moto-fi, if you will—has moved out of the realm of background music and become very much a part of the requisite equipment on a turn-key tourer. And in that move, moto-fi has reached a point where performance and features have approached those of high-quality car sound systems.

Part of the reason for the slow quality improvement in moto-fi is that you can't simply bolt on any old sound system and ride off. Motorcycles place almost impossible demands on sound systems. In fact, life on a motorcycle really couldn't get much worse for precision audio components: high ambient noise levels, dust, exposure to the elements and to vibration levels that could literally shake a finely tuned audio unit to pieces.

And moto-fi is more than just survival. Grafting a sound system onto two wheels tests more than just the system's durability. Not only must the hardware survive in a hostile environment, but the nature of a motorcycle imposes constraints on both speaker size and location as well. Space is at a premium on even the largest touring bikes, so large-cone speakers, the kind that produce the best bass, are an impossibility. Likewise, speaker location is more or less limited to the fairing or some other housing in front of the rider. Of course, there are headphone systems built into helmets, but some riders can't tolerate being "wired for sound"—and a growing number of states have outlawed the use of helmet-mounted headphones.

But despite its particular constraints, moto-fi's goal is the same as that of any other sound system: accurate sound reproduction. Nothing less will do. And with the growing sophistication of the sound systems on full-dress tourers, the quality of that sound has become an indication of the quality of the bike. But no one's ever taken a hard look at moto-fi, examined its limits and compared the top-of-the-line systems head-to-head. Until now, that is.

We've taken the sound systems from the four turn-key tourers—Clarion/Kawasaki, Mitsubishi/Yamaha, Motorola/Harley-Davidson and Panasonic/Honda—and given them a hard listen. How do they compare? Tune in and find out.

PHOTOGRAPHY © 1984 VIC HUBER

Daniel Sweeney is a freelance audiophile who's written articles for numerous car and home stereo publications.

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Clarion/Kawasaki

• The Voyager's system is built by Clarion, a leading producer of car audio components. This setup is a step down from the Aspencade's Panasonic rig in technical sophistication, but it's still luxurious by the standards of the moto-fi market.

This audio setup includes a cassette deck, AM-FM radio and a pair of two-way speakers mounted in the fairing. The radio includes four presets and a Local/Distance switch. While the Clarion cassette deck is not metal-capable, it does have Dolby circuitry to suppress tape hiss. The cassette unit is front-loading, and although the loading mechanism functions smoothly, the lid protecting the head and transport is small and difficult to raise, especially with gloved hands. Cassette player controls, unlike those on the Honda, aren't covered by the tape player's hinged lid.

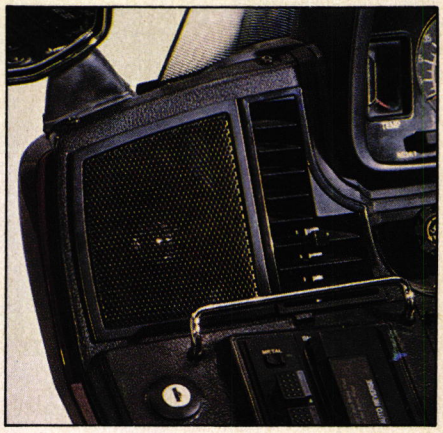
Overall, this is a low-resolution system. Even with the finest recordings, details of the musical performance do not come through. Stereo image is poorly defined, and individual voices and instruments are not clearly separated from one another. High frequencies are barely audible, though whether this is due to limitations in the cassette deck or the speakers is unclear. Bass, on the other hand, is present to a considerable degree. Bass drums are reproduced with an agreeable thunk, and bass guitar lines are readily distinguishable at virtually any level of engine noise. Of course, given the speakers' small size, there's really no bass, just a boost in the lower midrange to give the speakers "kick," but on rock recordings that boost gives the illusion of bass.

Amplifier power appears to be low, and the system couldn't attain sound levels in excess of approximately 100 decibels. But playing the Voyager's system at full gain is not recommended in any case. Not only is the sound ugly at high volume settings, but the distorted output from the amplifier is likely to damage the speakers if excessive high gain is sustained for any lengthy period. A more powerful amplifier would have helped the system overcome engine noise; even so, there's sufficient gain to float music over the din of ambient noise.

In spite of its generally lower performance level, the Kawasaki's system is much easier to listen to at moderately high volume levels than the Honda's. Quite simply, the Clairon's bass boost is less fatiguing than the Panasonic's treble emphasis. The Panasonic system is more refined, but it can also prove more abrasive for some listeners—and that's no small issue when you're alone with a motorcycle, a radio and hundreds of miles still to go.

though it's mounted on the radio itself in the left side of the fairing, not in the central instrument cluster, and so requires more eyes-off-road time to view than the other systems. Controls were somewhat too close together, making them only moderately easy to manipulate in gloves.

In use, the Mitsubishi unit displayed a



Mitsubishi/Yamaha

• Yamaha's Venture Royale includes an audio system that was built by Mitsubishi, a firm that is becoming active in car stereo and which has already gained a reputation for innovation. This motorcycle system probably will enhance that reputation, but the use of Mitsubishi equipment on the Venture raises one question: Why didn't Yamaha, already a producer of high-fidelity sound gear, manufacture its own system for the Venture?

Whatever the reasons, the Mitsubishi system is a match for the Honda's Panasonic unit—in features, at least. The cassette deck is metal-capable and equipped with Dolby, and the AM-FM receiver has four presets, automatic station search and an ambient-noise-level adjustment that controls volume by sensing actual ambient-noise level rather than gearing volume to road speed.

The cassette deck is side-loading and is partially obstructed by the left handlebar, making it difficult to load when the bike is moving. Loading action is smooth and positive, but the transport mechanism "ate" one of the test tapes, raising some doubt about the steadiness of the transport motion. The owner's manual warns users to make sure cassettes are tightly wound before insertion, and the warning should be observed. The digital readout for the radio is clearly visible,

limited frequency range. It lacked treble response, and cymbals and triangles sounded dull and muted. Bass boost was absent also, and low frequencies were poorly reproduced, lacking both impact and definition. Lower treble was slightly metallic, and in general the system had tonal quality better suited to AM radio than to high-fidelity reproduction. Stereo separation and resolution were somewhat better than the Clarion's but worse than the Panasonic's. One singular virtue present in the Mitsubishi system is that it can reproduce very soft sounds that are obscured by the others, though of course this can only be appreciated with the engine off.

In spite of matching the Panasonic's 12-watt power rating, the Yamaha's system could not match the Honda's for sheer volume, but it was less fatiguing at high gain. The ambient-noise-level adjustment was effective and unobtrusive, though the amplifier lacked the power to overcome engine noise at high rpm.

Both with this unit and its 50-watt, handlebar-mounted Music 'N Motion system, Yamaha has demonstrated a strong commitment to motorcycle high fidelity. This system has impressive features, but the sound could be improved—and sound is what audio is all about.

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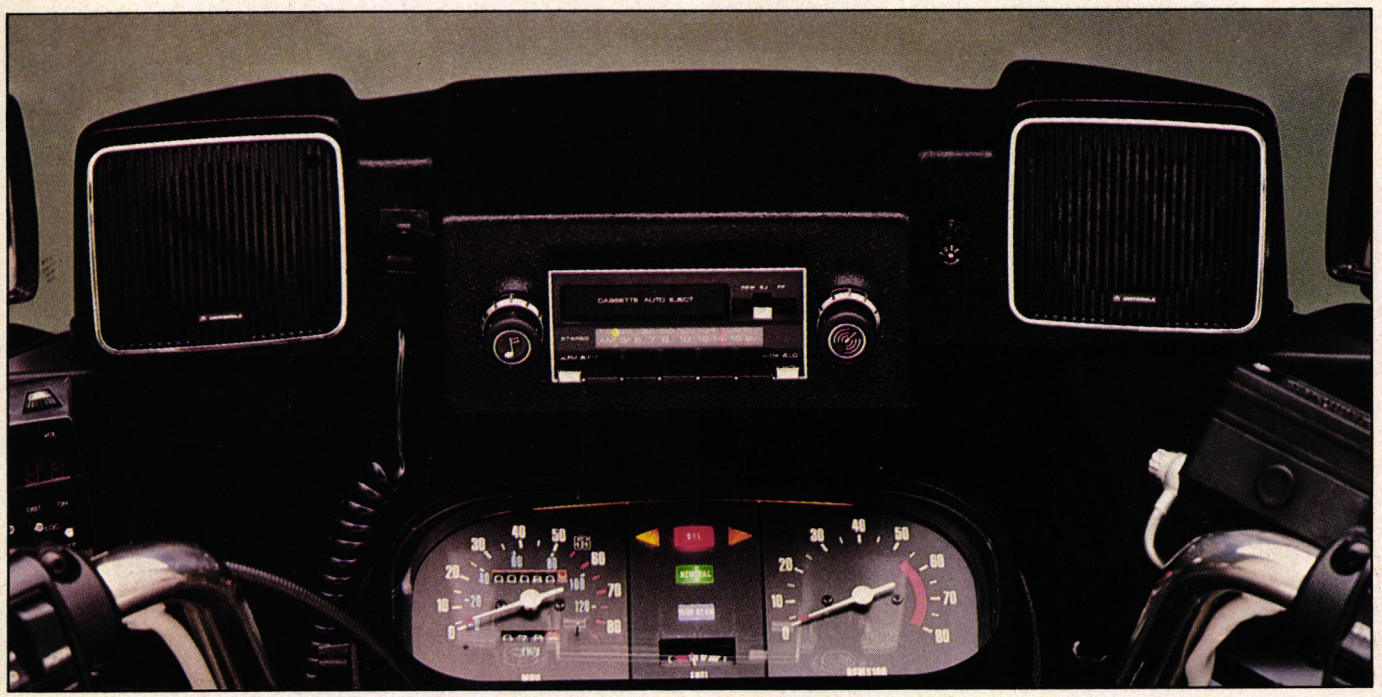


Motorola/ Harley-Davidson

• The FLTC is different from its Japanese competition, and its sound system is predictably different as well. With the FLTC the real music begins when you start up the engine; the noise is positively fierce—full of menace, defiance and God knows what else. The Harley's song should be enough for anyone, but some people still hanker for other entertainment. They can get it in the form of an optional, factory-installed Motorola system complete with cassette deck, AM-FM receiver and two speakers.

Sadly, though, the Harley's audio system is not in the same class as the other touring stereos. The tuner section has relatively few features, with only a Local/Distance switch and five presets. Controls consist of the standard Tone adjustment, Balance control and Fast Forward and Reverse switches. All are easy to manipulate and are clearly visible, but the system lacks the electronic displays that distinguish its rival systems. Also,

the cassette deck is not metal-capable, and lacks Dolby or any other form of noise reduction. That in itself is not particularly damning in a system designed for motorcycle use, but the deck is hard to load, and lacks any real weather-protective gate. Tape ejection was rough and violent, and could easily result in the loss of a cassette on the road.

Sound quality, too, is lacking in the Motorola system. Engine noise on the FLTC at highway speeds must approach 100 decibels, and while low-pitched tones predominate, the noise is sufficient to mask music regardless of the unit's setting. At lower speeds the music is audible, but engine vibration rattles the speakers severely and blurs the sound. Even with the engine shut off, the single-cone speakers have a limited frequency range. The resonant frequency of the speakers is roughly 160 Hz, a few notes below Middle C; the speakers have negligible response below that point. Precise data on high-frequency response was not available, but it probably doesn't extend beyond 8 KHz. Cymbals, bells and similar high-pitched percussion instruments were poorly reproduced. Maximum power was reported to be six watts, and the system sounded notably less dynamic than its competitors.

This system, such as it is, is really only suitable for listening during low-speed riding or while you're stopped by the side of the road stretching your legs. But in view of the high level of ambient noise on the FLTC, a better system probably would be wasted.

Panasonic/Honda

• Most cars have nothing so extravagant as the Honda/Panasonic system on the Aspencade. With its multiple knobs, dials and readouts, this is bells-and-whistles stereo at its most pronounced, but in terms of good audio how, much of the flash is really functional?

Not all of it, to be sure, but still enough to make the Aspencade's system the best of its kind. The tuner section has a number of worthwhile features, among them eight presets (four each for AM and FM), automatic station scanning, a Local/Distance switch and an ambient-noise-level adjustment that increases or decreases system volume according to vehicle speed. Mitsubishi developed a similar noise-level adjustment system for automobiles, but it seems far more applicable for motorcycles, where sound insulation is virtually nonexistent.

The Panasonic cassette deck is side-loading, adjustable for metal tape and is equipped with Dolby B noise-reduction circuitry. In view of the high level of background noise present on a motorcycle, the tape hiss that Dolby is supposed to suppress will be inaudible anyway, but since most prerecorded cassettes are Dolby-encoded, this feature allows the widest selection of program material.

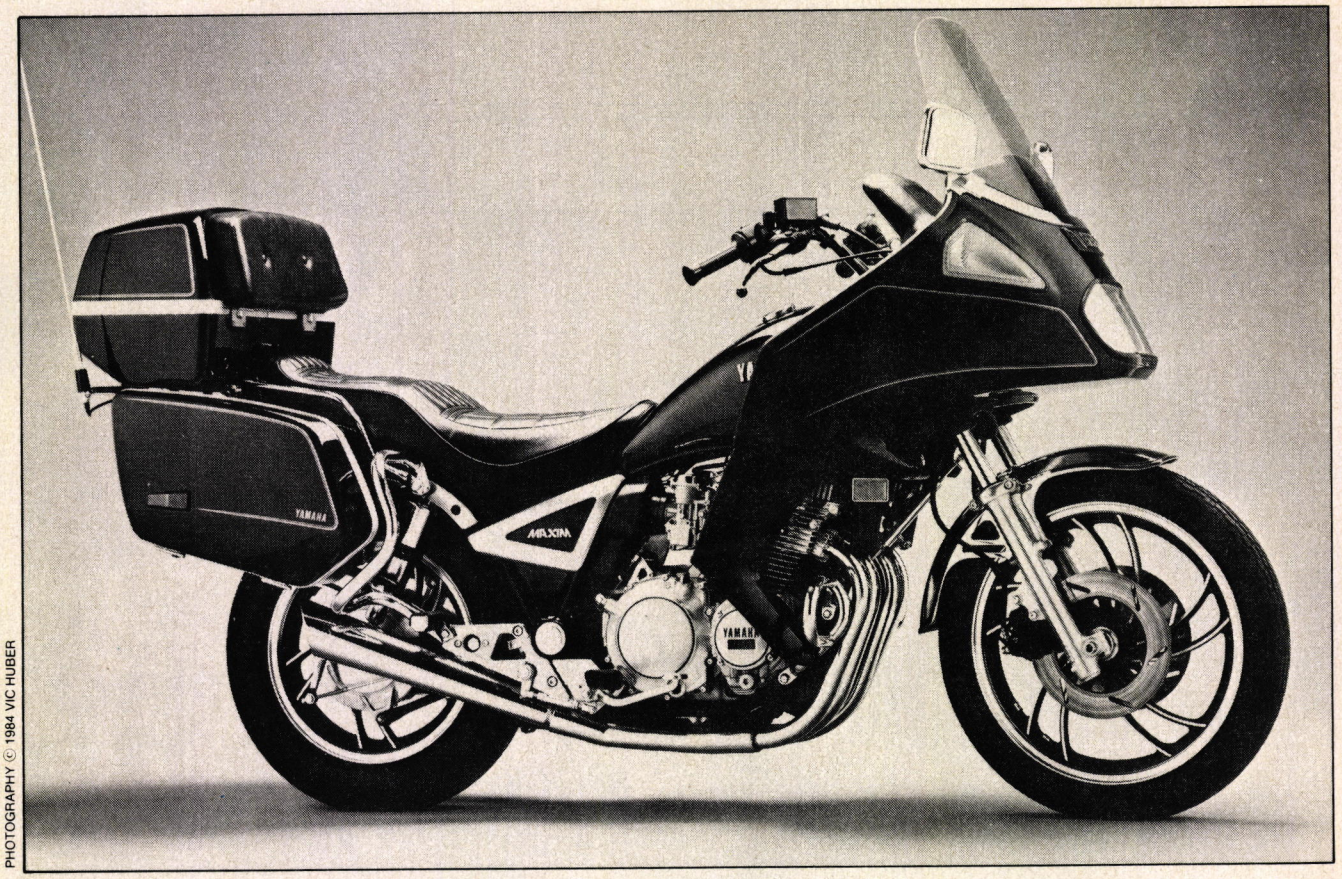
A large, easily opened, hinged metal lid protects the cassette playback head and transport system; loading and unloading tapes is easily accomplished. Less pleasing are the Fast Forward and Reverse switches, which are concealed behind the lid and can't be operated with the lid closed. Volume controls are somewhat hard to adjust with gloves on.

Each speaker uses a single, plastic, weather-resistant cone driver housed in a plastic enclosure. Speaker quality is not especially high compared to the better car stereo setups, and system response was less impressive than it could have been. Still, it is superior in most respects to the sound quality of any of the three other systems.

The Aspencade's system barely reproduced the top octave of the musical spectrum, but it reached higher into the treble than any of the competing units. Treble frequencies seemed overly pronounced, and cymbals and the high notes of the piano came through with a hard, aggressive presence. This kind of tonal balance makes pop recording sound "hot" and exciting, but the harsh treble could make extended listening somewhat irritating. Bass, on the other hand, was weak. Since you can't get really low bass out of small speakers, that's not surprising. There is enough upper bass response to permit drumbeats to be heard, but bass guitar is inaudible.

Overall, power and stereo imaging are the system's strong points. Receiver power is rated at 12 watts, not overly powerful by automotive standards but sufficient to drive the speakers to an estimated 105 decibels at full output. Tonal character doesn't change much at high levels—a good sign in any sound system—and even engine noise at highway speeds will not drown out the music. Stereo separation is also good, extraordinarily so. Instruments and voices are spread out in clearly defined positions, and coloristic details like woodblocks and chimes are plainly audible.

In all, the Aspencade's audio package is easily the best of its kind, but it doesn't exceed the sound quality of a high-priced boom box. The whole system, including CB, is available as an option on the Interstate for $949.80. The best in moto-high-fidelity doesn't come cheaply. •



PHOTOGRAPHY © 1984 VIC HUBER

PRODUCT EVALUATION:

Yamaha Tour Deluxe Package

The bolt-on alternative for the cruiser set.

• Despite the competence of the newest purpose-built tourers, they don't have an exclusive on long-distance ability. A bike with a well-designed accessory fairing and luggage set can offer sufficient wind protection and carrying capacity for touring, without all the weight and expense of a factory-built, turn-key tourer. For Maxim 750 and Virago 750/920 owners who find the bolt-on conversion attractive, Yamaha offers the Tour Deluxe Package.

Yamaha designed its Tour Deluxe accessories to convert the Maxim and Virago models into full-dress tourers, so the package includes more than just a fairing and saddlebags. The complete kit ($995 for the Virago, $1050 for the Maxim) includes a fairing, removable saddlebags and travel trunk (all painted in one of four Yamaha colors: Yamaha Black, Ruby Red, Star Silver or Super Red), with chrome-plated case and frame guards and all mounting hardware.

In addition to those pieces, the Tour Deluxe also includes a number of details to complete the package. There's a plastic "eyebrow" that clips onto the instrument panel to eliminate instrument glare on the windshield. The windshield height is adjustable, and two knobs on the inside of the fairing provide easy horizontal and vertical headlight adjustment. Each saddlebag has a fixed, interior plastic tray to keep the contents in the place when the bag is opened. And to help offset any ill-effects the kit's 94 pounds might have on handling, the Tour Deluxe package for the Virago includes a steering damper, while the kit for the Maxim includes a steering damper and fork brace. There are also a number of extra-cost options available for the touring kits, including fairing-mounted mirrors, a choice of two sound systems, saddlebag liners and a different seat.

Yamaha's Tour Deluxe is not only extensive; the parts are well-finished as well. The paint on the fairing and luggage was outstanding on the example we tested. The luggage features flush-mounted locks to keep the exteriors uncluttered, the interiors have no surface flaws, and the openings feature an aluminum molding with a tongue-and-groove weather seal. In addition, the trunk includes a built-in backrest, and each bag has a convenient folding handle. All the pieces have a high-quality, well-finished look to them, and the kit seems quite complete.

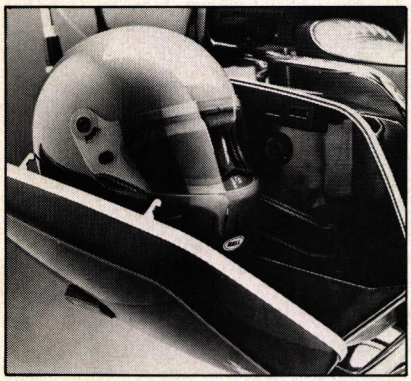
But appearances mean little when you're on the open road. And there, the Tour Deluxe set seems a little less attractive than it is in the showroom. The fairing protects the rider fairly well, allowing a minimum of helmet buffeting with the windshield in the lowest position. But the fairing rattles, and the mirrors flutter at speed. On top of that, the instrument visor is easily knocked out of position, and the steering-damper mount tore through our test bike's speedometer-cable sheath after less than 200 miles.

The problems with the fairing and the appointments are relatively small, but the luggage has some serious drawbacks for touring use. First off, all three of the bags we tested leaked. Secondly, the luggage has only marginal capacity for a week-long ride. Neither saddlebag will hold a full-coverage helmet, and the

plastic trays and internal lock mechanisms limit both the size and *shape* of what will fit in the bags. The trays can be unfastened and removed, but the locks are permanent. The trunk isn't especially roomy either, but it will hold two full-coverage helmets if they are carefully arranged around the lock mechanism.

In addition to using up valuable storage space, the locks are aggravating, because a key must be used to open, close, remove or attach the bags or trunk. And the bags' convenience is further compromised by a complicated attachment mechanism, and the fact that the dressed bike requires four keys to operate all its features—six if the optional radio and cassette player are included.

The major problem with the luggage, however, has nothing to do with convenience. With the bags attached, the Maxim is wide—32 inches, as wide as most turn-key tourers—and decidedly top-heavy. In fact, despite the fork brace and steering damper, the overall handling of the dressed Maxim was considerably different from that of the stocker. The dressed bike was comfortable for around town and highway use, but the suspension felt undersprung and

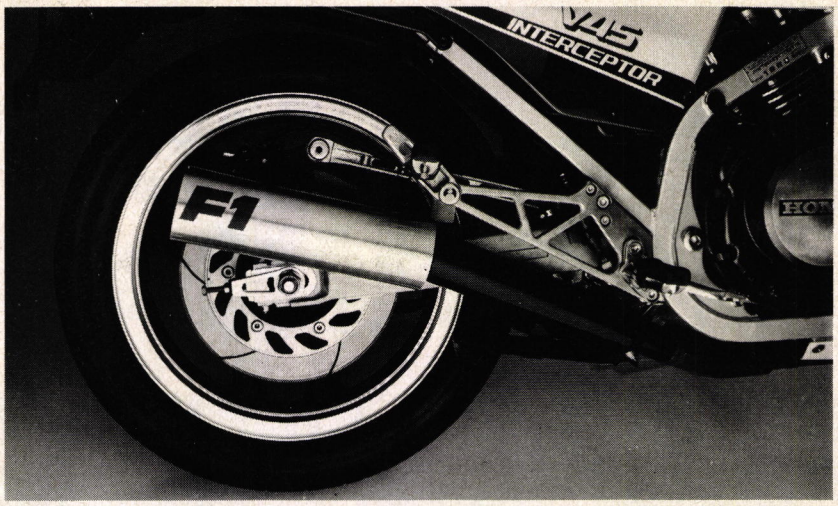


Interior tray limits bag's usefulness

By limiting the shape of what goes in.

underdamped with the additional weight of the touring equipment. And compared with the stock Maxim, the dresser tended to fall into slow turns and take a wider line through faster corners. The dressed Maxim also wandered on raingrooves and felt less secure than the stock bike at high speeds.

There's no doubt that Yamaha's Tour Deluxe offers a high level of fit and finish, and has the added attraction of being available from—and financed through—Yamaha dealers. But with its niggling inconveniences, limited capacity and its effects on the bike's handling, the Tour Deluxe won't convert your Maxim or Virago into a bargain-basement turn-key tourer. —*Jim Miller*



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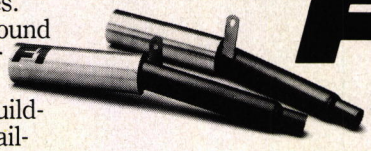

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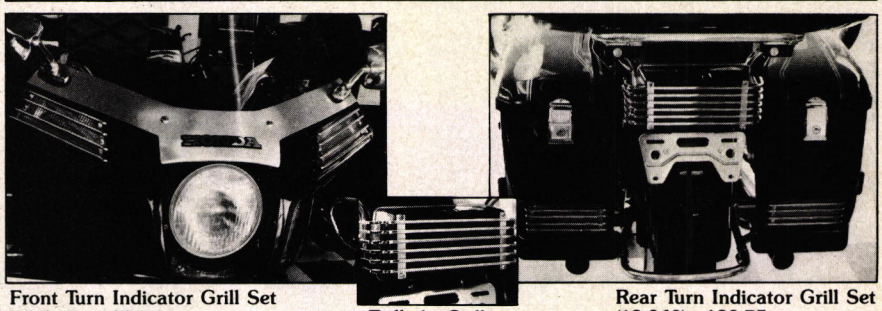

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ROAD TEST:

Harley-Davidson FXRT

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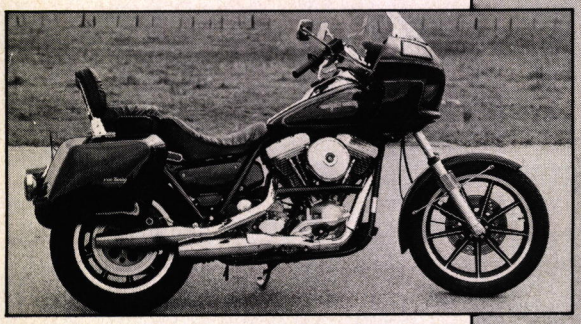

FXRT offers big-rig touring performance

In a lighter, more compact package.

• Long-haul purists might insist the only way to go touring is aboard a fully appointed motorcycle, but they're wrong.

And Harley-Davidson's FXRT Sport Glide provides the proof. By that purist standard, the FXRT, despite its fairing and saddlebags, is almost a stripper. But in function, the bike can equal almost any of the heavyweight tourers. Moreover, the FXRT is substantially lighter and less bulky than the big rigs.

Part of the Harley's lack of girth is due to its narrow engine. The bike feels slim, which, with a low center of gravity, aids maneuverability, making the FXRT easier to ride in traffic than most full-dress tourers. Consequently, the bike's usefulness isn't limited to freeway riding.

The vee-twin engine is also the greatest change in the FXRT's package for '84. Harley gave the bike the new five-speed V² Evolution engine, an update of H-D's big twin with an all-new top end. And the Evolution motor's torquey nature and wide spread of power allow the bike to swallow mile after mile with little apparent effort. Furthermore, the new engine uses the Shovelhead's rubber mounts, which keep most of the vibration from the rider and contribute to long-ride comfort.

Harley-Davidson also replaced the '83 FXRT's dual-disc front brake setup with a larger-diameter single disc and a more rigid caliper, which provide good stopping power but require whole-handed effort at the lever. The FXRT retains its anti-dive system from last year, though. The system connects the fork air caps to each other and to an accumulator. When either brake is applied, a valve at the accumulator is closed electrically, sealing off the chamber and restricting the fork's air volume. And at recommended pressures (4–20 psi), the bike's nosedive is noticeably reduced, though not completely eliminated.

Like the fork, the shocks are air-adjustable, and both can be tuned to offer a superior ride. Unfortunately, the suspension has to cover for the thin saddle and a seating position that places most of the rider's weight on his buttocks.

Pumping the fork and shocks up to near-maximum pressures doesn't seriously damage the ride quality, and helps the FXRT maintain its composure when the going gets twisty. The bike has remarkably good cornering clearance, which, combined with light—but not quick—steering, and chassis geometry configured for stability, enable the FXRT to keep up a respectable pace should you decide to sample some backroad touring. But the fork's stanchion tubes would be more at home on a smaller bike, and the flex they allow makes the steering vague and imprecise during abrupt direction changes.

Harley-Davidson does bill the FXRT as a sport-tourer, but the emphasis clearly is on touring. That's not only apparent in the engine and chassis performance but in the touring gear, as well. The frame-mount fairing, while lacking the size of those on big rigs, affords comparable protection. Likewise, the bags lack the capacity of some full dressers, but they offer most of the features, such as convenient latches and nylon liners.

It isn't just the bolt-on pieces that make the FXRT such a willing partner on tour, however. The strong, smooth engine, supple suspension and lightweight feel make Harley's Sport Glide easy to ride for mile after mile. Those are things that have to be built into the bike from the start—they can't be added on, like stereos, CBs and travel trunks. They're also what makes the FXRT a rational alternative to the heavyweight full-dressers. —*Charles Everitt*

HARLEY-DAVIDSON FXRT

IMPORTER: Harley-Davidson Motor Company Inc.
3700 West Juneau Avenue
Milwaukee, Wisconsin 53201

Category	touring
Suggested retail price	$7699
Engine type	four-stroke 45-degree tandem vee-twin
Valve arrangement	pushrod-operated overhead valves
Bore and stroke	88.8mm x 108.0mm
Displacement	1337.7cc
Compression ratio	8.5:1
Carburetion	one 38mm Keihin butterfly-type, with accelerator pump
Gearbox	5-speed
Front fork/wheel travel	Showa air-spring, 35mm stanchion tube diameter brake-actuated pneumatic anti-dive/6.1 in. (155mm)
Rear shocks/wheel travel	dual Showa shocks, 3-position adjustable spring preload/3.7 in. (94mm)
Wheelbase	64.4 to 65.8 in. (1636 to 1670mm)
Seat height	29.6 in (752mm)
Weight	639 lbs. (289.8kg)
Best ¼-mile acceleration	13.928 sec., 93.65 mph (151 km/h)
Top speed (observed)	112 mph (180 km/h)
Stopping distance from 60 mph	140 ft. (42.7m)
Fuel consumption	34 to 61 mpg (14 to 26 km/l)
Warranty	12 months, unlimited mileage
Available colors	Vivid Black; Candy Red

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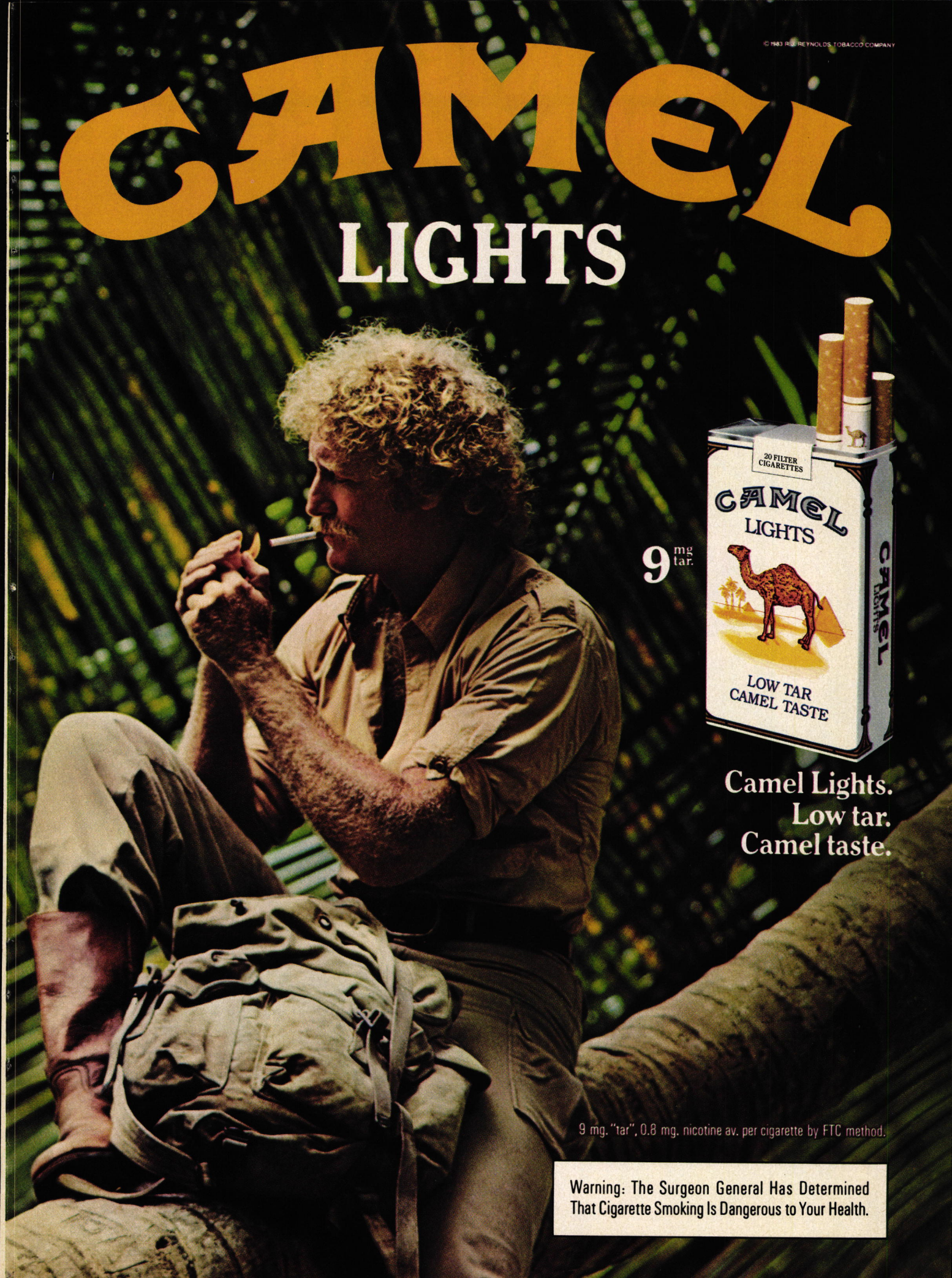

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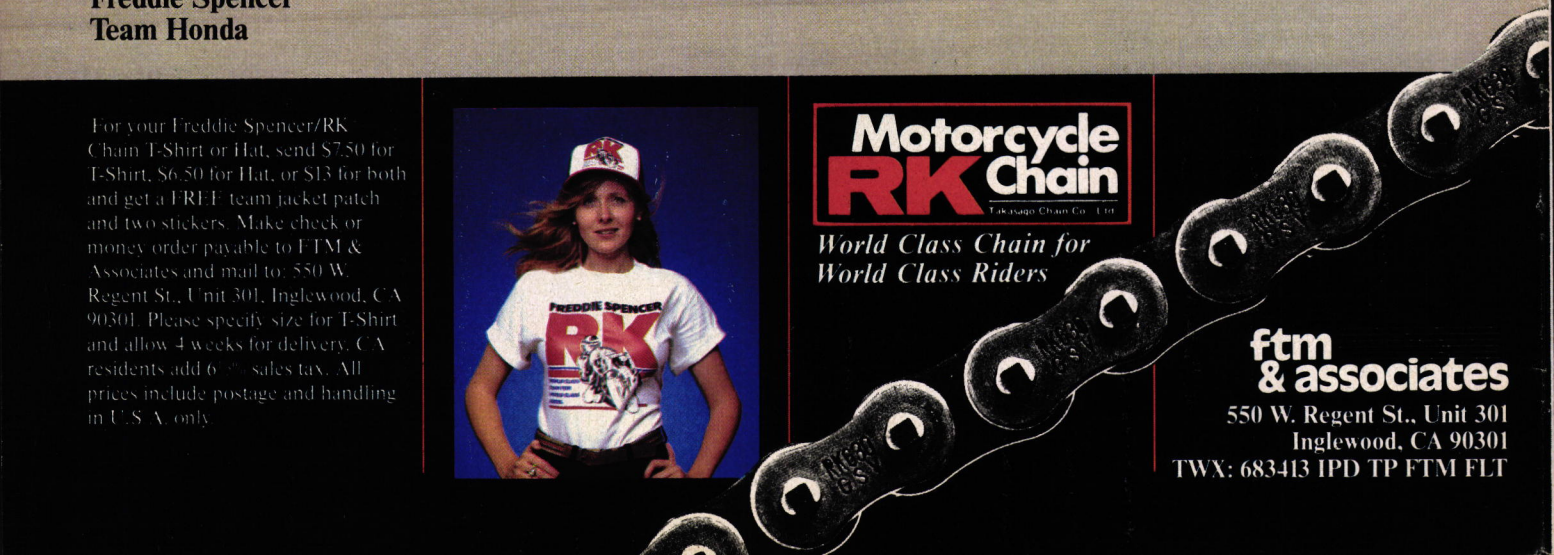

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SPORT LINES

Cycle Guide's True Tales of Race Courses, Dark Horses and Machines at Speed

EDITED BY DAIN GINGERELLI

PHOTOGRAPHY © 1984 1984 DAVID DEWHURST

Paying the Dues

• What do professional motocross racers do on their days off? After all, they show up only once a week at the office for work; that leaves six days unaccounted for. And when you earn a salary with six digits behind the dollar sign, it's logical to assume those racers could find plenty of distractions to keep them occupied during that free time.

But most successful professional MX racers do more than just play video games and lie around by the poolside during the week. Dedicated racers usually spend their spare days training, because training gives them the edge they need to win on race day. As Yamaha race director Ken Clark once said, "The factory riders train harder, work harder than the privateers." And it's hard work that gained them membership in the exclusive fraternity of factory riders.

Membership fees are high for the Fraternity.

But it's the off-season that is the roughest for the racers, because that's the time they have *seven* days a week in which to prepare for the upcoming season. Consequently, you'll find most team riders train hard in Nautilus conditioning programs, jog, and most important of all, ride motocross bikes as often as they can to maintain a sharpness for what they are hired for: racing.

And so, with this in mind, we went to a practice riding session with Kawasaki factory rider Jeff Ward. Ward's off-season afternoon involved putting in laps on a practice bike in the morning, followed by an afternoon session to sort out the new factory 250 racer. It was a typical day for Ward, one without the glamour of race day, yet essential for success later in the year. And as Ward, and every other factory rider knows, those days are what make the difference between a winning season and a losing one.

—Dain Gingerelli

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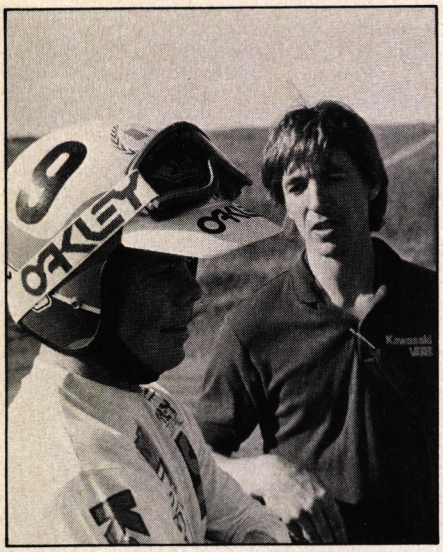

Team Manager Roy Turner talks with Ward

Sorting out the bugs early in the year.

Ward riding a production KX250 during one of his regular warmups

No thumb-twiddling while waiting for the works bike.

• It's mid-December and Jeff Ward has just returned from Japan, where he and teammate Kent Howerton tested the new 1984 Kawasaki works bikes. Today, Ward is at a private track near Lake Elsinore, about 50 miles from his house in Mission Viejo, California. It's a track that Ward often uses when Saddleback Park is not available, and today, Saddleback is a ribbon of mud and ruts from a weekend rainstorm.

Ward unloads a stock 1983 KX250 to ride. His mechanic, Mike McAndrews, will be here later with the new 250 works bike. But for now, Ward rides the comparatively heavy KX250.

He puts his helmet on, and the tight-fitting open-face Bell squishes his freckled cheeks. He winces and says, "This helmet is still wet from the last time I practiced." That was Friday. Ward works hard; the cold, damp helmet is proof.

He fires up the KX's engine, then is on the track for an hour or so of riding. He won't come in until he's ridden almost the equivalent of two motos.

Ward explained that his time in Japan made him rusty. "I don't do a whole lot over there," he said. "Some test riding, but mostly I just sit around and go through the electronics shops." Now he's paying for the

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Sandlot Racers

• There's a general misconception that the factory teams, with all their megabucks, have secret test tracks for their riders. Everyone thinks that it's at these secluded tracks where guys such as Bob Hannah, Broc Glover and Jeff Ward develop their skills. Wrong.

In fact, most of the teams use the same tracks in Southern California that are available to the privateers. It's not uncommon for the factory teams to practice or test new equipment at Saddleback Park and Indian Dunes.

But some industrious team riders manage to find a piece of land in the desert or inland canyons, and carve out their own track. For instance, Jeff Ward has his chosen spot, as does Honda's Johnny O'Mara.

And last June, some of the European Honda factory riders got a taste of what it's like to have a private practice track. Graham Noyce, Andre Malherbe and David Thorpe had arrived early in California for the Carlsbad USGP, figuring to acclimate themselves to the warm, dry weather. And to keep in shape, they went to O'Mara's practice track the Thursday before the race.

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Andre Malherbe found out the hard way how American motocross racers practice

And in the process, he learned that there's no place like home.

As Keith Thorpe, David Thorpe's father, recalled, the track was bumpy and rutty and overall, "not very good." But before the Europeans could make even one lap, the local sheriff showed up, and ran everybody off.

"It didn't matter to Malherbe whether the police came or not," said the senior Thorpe. "He wasn't going to ride on that track anyway. It was in too terrible shape."

So much for factory teams and their secret test tracks. —*Dain Gingerelli*

Continued

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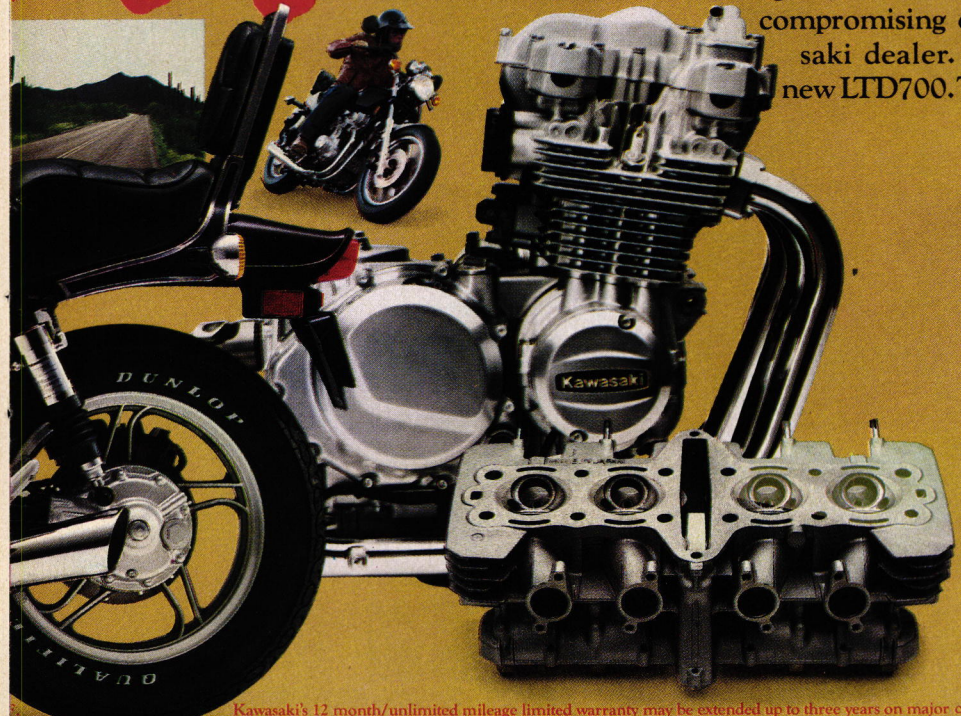

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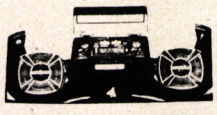

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The secret to success is practice; Jeff Ward puts in the equivalent of two motos.

Some of his track time is on a secluded field near Lake Elsinore.

lack of track time, and he makes a few mistakes.

After watching him ride for an hour, the obvious question is whether or not he gets bored riding by himself. "No, I just concentrate on going faster and faster each lap. I work to a rhythm, and work on my concentration."

Finally, the factory transporter arrives with the 1983 and '84 250-class racebikes. The bike is still not sorted out, and it's the first time team manager Roy Turner has had it on an American track. Before the '84 bike is even fired up, Turner tells Ward to go out on the '83 bike to warm up. Ward has already put in the equivalent of three Supercross Mains with the KX250.

From the very first lap, Ward looks smooth and confident on the '83 works racer. He attacks the corners, flicking the tiny green machine off berms like a 125. Despite being out of the saddle most of the month, he looks in top form on this bike. McAndrews isn't surprised: "He's had all year to adjust to that bike."

Ward comes in after a half hour and switches to the new bike. He looks unsure, as if he doesn't quite know how to ride it. He enters the turns slower than he did on the '83 racer, and doesn't look radical off the jumps or berms. Everybody, except Turner, who is taking lap times, is dubious.

Ward comes in and says the rear brake—a disc—is "too touchy." The bike is also hard to steer, he says. McAndrews, who understands Ward's riding style, figures it might be the handlebar height, and finds a new, higher bar in the van to try later.

Turner and Ward confer. Turner appears puzzled, and finally says, "You went faster on the new bike." Ward says, almost in defiance, "But I felt slower, and clumsy." Turner shows him the lap times, and they huddle again. Turner figures Ward made most of his time coming out of the corners. Ward agrees, saying that the engine has good mid-range power: "It should be good for the stadiums."

While McAndrews changes the handlebar and fork, and adjusts the disc brake, Ward takes time out for lunch—a three-day-old tuna sandwich from Friday night. Talk turns to the past weekend's activities. "I got caught up around the house," says McAndrews, never looking up from the disassembled fork.

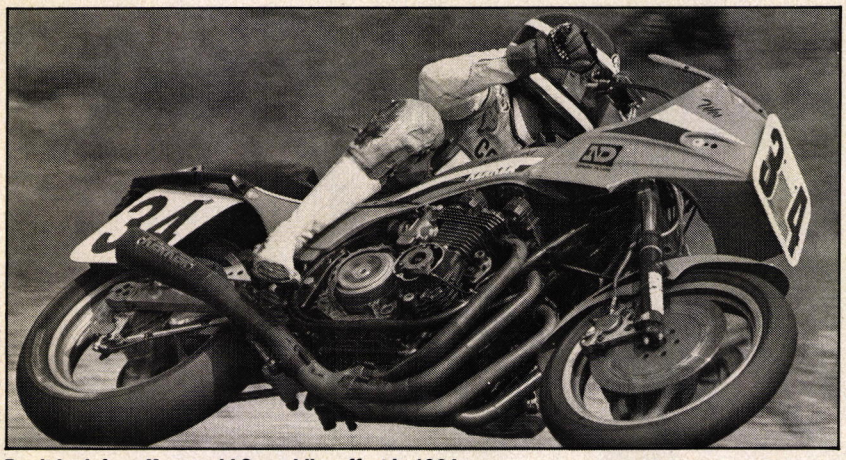
Ward boasts, "I got caught up watching football games and resting." Watching weekend TV is a luxury that he'll enjoy for several more weeks, until the racing resumes. Once the Wrangler Super Series began, the only weekends he had free last year were Easter and the weekends of the two USGPs, in which he didn't race.

The testing continues, almost at a leisurely pace. Not a typical day for a motocross team. During the season, McAndrews will have to find time to maintain the racebike during the days between races; most work is done in motel parking lots.

As for Ward, his race-season schedule follows a regular cycle: race and travel on Sunday, practice for three days—Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday—travel to the next race on Friday, then back on the track Saturday and Sunday.

But most of all, he says, it's important to ride those three days of the week, to keep his reactions sharp. "I can feel a difference if I don't keep riding," he said. It's a regimen that can make the difference between being a factory rider and an also-ran. And considering what's at stake, it's a small price to pay. —*Dain Gingerelli*

Pit Bits



© 1984 TOM RILES

Don't look for a Kawasaki Superbike effort in 1984

But there's a rumor circulating that the Big K will be back for '85.

• Kawasaki Superbike: There's a strong chance that Kawasaki will return to Superbike racing. Although no official announcement has been made, the rumor at Kawasaki is that if the GPz750R—a 750cc version (sold only in Japan) of the GPz900R—is released to the United States market in the near future, there would be reason to go AMA Superbike racing again.

• This means war: When AMA Superbike champion Wayne Rainey was asked about a return to Kawasaki, he said, "They've (Kawasaki) talked to me, but they indicated 1986. We could be at war by then."

• Team Ninja: While the Kawasaki Superbike project might not materialize for another year or two, sources at Kawasaki are talking about promoting, in conjunction with various roadrace organizations across the country, a series based on the new GPz900R Ninja. Talk has focused on a championship series similar to Yamaha's RD350 challenge series in Europe and England. All entrants, in this case, would ride GPz900Rs.

• Honda 500 vee-four: Freddie Spencer was in Australia last December testing the new Honda vee-four 500cc two-stroke. Just in case the vee-four proves uncompetitive or unreliable, Honda will have an updated version of the NS500 triple. Spencer's teammates, Ron Haslam and Takazumi Katayama, will race the vee-threes.

• Tag team racing: Tag Cigarettes, an American tobacco company, has been negotiating a sponsorship deal with Suzuki's GP roadrace team. If a deal is struck with Tag, Suzuki will develop a new GP bike for Randy Mamola. Mamola's RG500-based square-four was smoked last year by the Yamaha and Honda vees.

• Roberts breaks the habit: Meanwhile,

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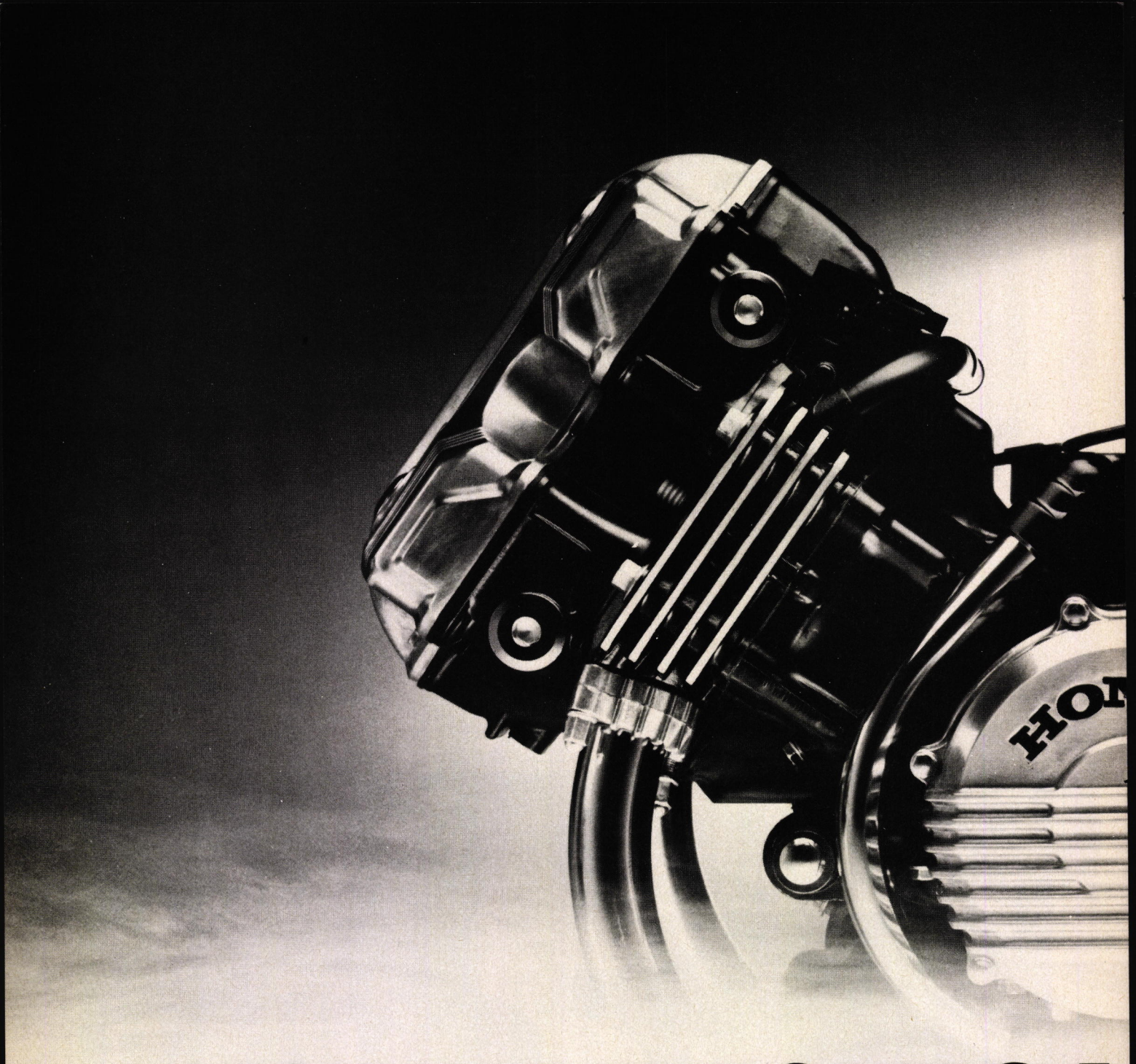

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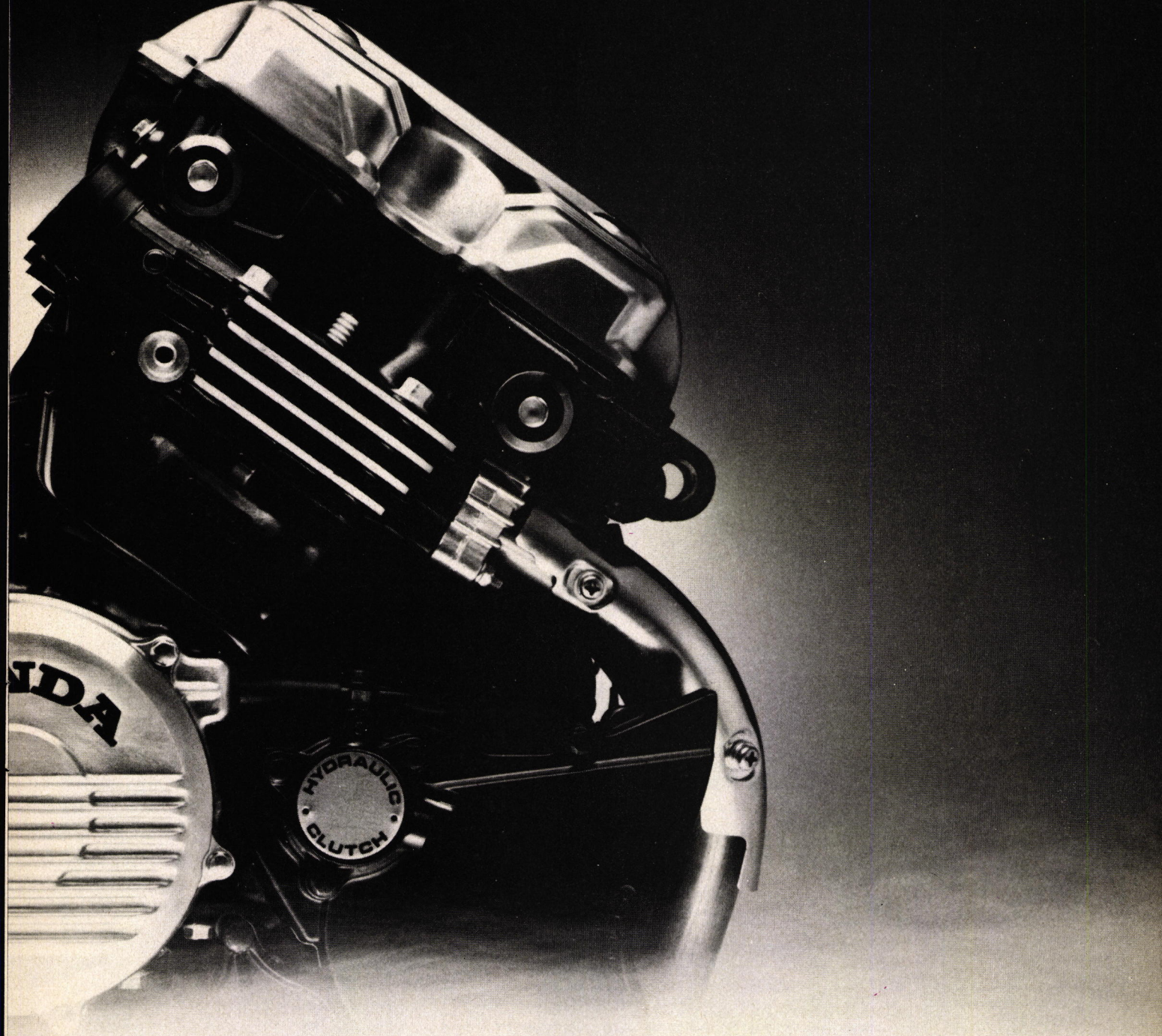

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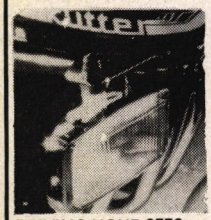

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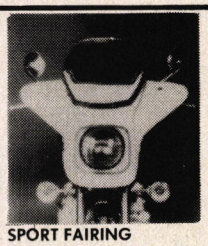

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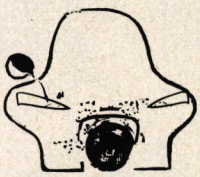

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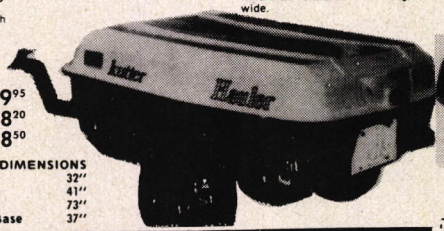

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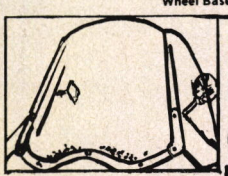

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Pit Bits

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Wayne Rainey after Laguna Seca win

War predicted before 1986.

Kenny Roberts broke the racing habit with Marlboro cigarettes, and announced his retirement from world championship GP racing (see Winners & Losers). In a prepared statement, Roberts announced that he would race "one or two GPs, depending on whether the equipment is there."

- Telegram for Mr. Roberts: Shortly before King Kenny semi-retired, he received a telegram congratulating him on his career. It read: "I am happy to send greetings and congratulations as you are honored by your many friends and admirers on your retirement from motorcycle competition. Your career as a motorcycle racer has thrilled audiences for many years. May you meet with much success in future endeavors. With every good wish, and again, congratulations. Ronald Reagan."
- Team Tamm: Alan King will join Jeff Hicks on Team Tamm this year. Both riders will race Honda CRs in the AMA Wrangler Super Series.
- Georges Jobe turns green: And in Europe, 250cc World Champion Georges Jobe signed with Kawasaki. Earlier, Jobe and other Team Suzuki members were without rides when Suzuki dropped its GP motocross program, following a dual-championship year.
- Kawasaki gets the Goat: Goat Breker will return to Kawasaki's American motocross team for 1984. Breker will ride the Open class and Supercross, while Jeff Ward continues his 125 and Supercross chores, and former 250 and Open champ Kent Howerton winds down his career in the 250 class. Billy Liles will race with Howerton in the 250 class, and with Jeff Ward in the Supercross program.
- AMA Race of Champions: The AMA formed a new roadrace series, the AMA Championship Cup Series. The series is slated for East Coast tracks only, but plans call for it to go west by 1985. All AMA pro license holders, as well as members of WERA, AAMRR, AFM,

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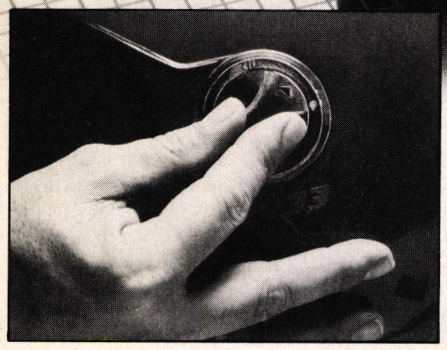

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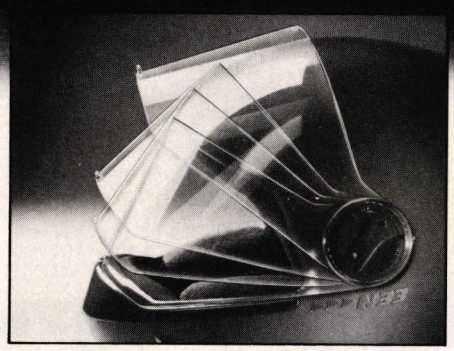

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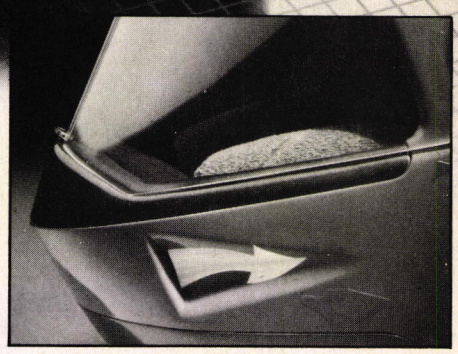

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We are the U.S. LIST PROTECTION COMPANY and we protect mailing list owners from having their valuable list of customers stolen or used without authorization. In addition, at the same time, we monitor the delivery of the United States Postal Service. This is a very important service for a mailing list owner to have. He has to protect his mailing list because in many cases, it cost him hundreds of thousands of dollars to complile. If a mailing list was stolen and left undetected, it could very well put the list owner out of business.

Here is where you come in and how we protect our clients from having their mailing lists used without authorization. We have thousands of mailing list owners who allow many authorized mailings on their list each year. Each time an authorized mailing is made, they are vulnerable to having their list stolen. Therefore, we supply the mailing list owners with a secret list of "decoy" names and addresses. He inserts these "decoys" into his mailing list without making anybody aware of it. Then if an unauthorized mailing is made on the list, the "decoys" will receive more mail than they are supposed to. The mailing list owner will have solid evidence of any unauthorized mailings and can pursue legal action on that basis.

You, as a Mailing List Protection Agent, will have your address and a code name used as a decoy. For example, if your name is Robert Smith, you may give yourself the code name of James Smith. This way you can distinguish your personal mail from the decoy mail. Now, when you get your daily mail, you will simply sort the coded mail from the personal mail and put the date on the face of the envelopes of the coded mail. Each week you will take all of your coded mail and put it in a special package that we will supply. Then you will forward it to us for payment. What could be easier?

What Happens Next?

When your package of coded dated mail arrives at our office, we will count the number of pieces in the package and send you a check the same day along with another special package for your next group of coded dated mail. We then match the mail you sent us and forward it to the proper list owner for his use.

When you receive the next correspondence from us, it will include the following: 1) A payment of 30¢ for each coded dated piece of mail inside. 2) A payment for the postage money you spent to send us the previous package. 3) Another special package for the next group of mail.

Examples: Suppose various packages contained the following quantities of coded dated mail on different occasions. Here is how much money you would receive . . .

Group One contains 384 pieces in the package you forwarded us - WE PAY YOU $115.20 plus the postage money you spent to send us the package!

Group Two contains 671 pieces in the package you forwarded us - WE PAY YOU $201.30 plus the postage money you spent to send us the package!

Group Three contains 917 pieces in the package you forwarded us - WE PAY YOU $275.10 plus the postage money you spent to send us the package!

We want you because we have a current need for agents with decoy addresses all over the United States. Our address is so well known that it could never be used as an effective decoy. Not to mention, many of our list owner clients are involved in regional mailings, thus we need decoys in all 50 states. Consequently, it doesn't matter where you live, you can become a Mailing List Protection Agent as long as you have an address in the United States or Canada.

How You Can Get Started So You Can Make Extra Money As A Mailing List Protection Agent

In order to get officially registered as a Mailing List Protection Agent, you must pay a one time fee as indicated on the LIFETIME REGISTRATION CERTIFICATE. The fee covers all the computer costs of getting your code name and address integrated into the system, setting up your file for payment in our office, and start-up kit we will send you as soon as you register.

Your start-up kit consists of easy-to-follow instructions, an easy-to-complete form you must fill out one time for our files, and your first special package to forward coded dated mailing pieces back to us for payment.

Imagine making extra money as a Mailing List Protection Agent. There isn't an easier way to make an honest income. And the best part is that you can make a substantial second income and spend only a few short minutes each week doing it!

The amount of openings we have for Mailing List Security Agents is severely limited. We only need a few honest dependable individuals in each area. Therefore, you must register within the next two weeks to qualify. You have 14 days to forward to us the LIFETIME REGISTRATION CERTIFICATE along with your payment. If you send your registration in after that time, we reserve the right to refuse your request and, of course, immediately return your remittance, if you're rejected because you didn't meet the deadline.

Now is your chance to get in on the easiest way of accumulating extra money that has never been made available. For the next 14 days, you have the chance to join others who are reaping the financial rewards by acting as a Mailing List Protection Agent. Don't lose out on this opportunity to cash in. Say "YES" and ACT NOW before time runs out and it is too late!

Offer good in Canada - U.S. funds only.

Sincerely, Susan Williams

Susan Williams, U.S. List Protection Co.

P.S. Please do not request that we register you without payment and later deduct it from your first check. We do not operate in such a manner because there are too many people willing to pay in advance. Furthermore, it creates an unnecessary bookkeeping problem if we have to keep records to remind us to make such deductions.

CG-3-84

LIFETIME REGISTRATION CERTIFICATE

(MAIL TODAY)

☐ YES, I accept your invitation to become a Mailing List Protection Agent.

Enclosed is $25.00 ☐Cash ☐Money Order ☐Check

for my lifetime registration and start-up kit.
(Note - Prompt shipment guaranteed if you pay by cash or by money order.)

☐ I'm in a hurry to make money! Enclosed is an extra $2.00. Please rush my start-up kit by first class mail

(PLEASE PRINT) Name _____

Code Name (Select any name you want to use) _____

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Pit Bits

FGPRA, CRRC, CRA and MRA can race in the series. For more information, call (912) 598-0602.

• Formula 1, FIM-style: The FIM adopted new Formula 1 rules for 1984. The new displacement limit is similar to the AMA's F1 rule: Two-strokes can displace anywhere from 350cc to 500cc, while four-strokes can measure 600cc to 750cc. There is no provision for the TZ750, as there is in the AMA rule book. Evidently, the FIM believes that antiques belong in museums, not on racetracks.

• Yamaha 500 vee-four out: Contrary to earlier reports, there will be no Yamaha YZR500 vee-four roadracers sold in America. Late last year, Ken Clark, Yamaha Race Director, had announced that the rotary-valve vee-four racebike would be available for sale in the U.S. That has changed. In fact, Yamaha is importing no TZ roadracers other than a limited number of TZ250Ls.

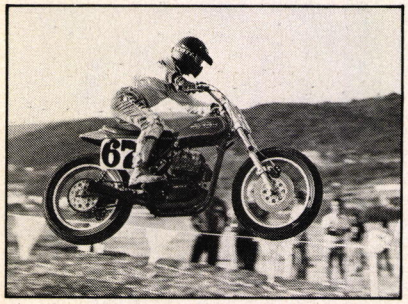
• Made in Japan: Dunlop roadrace slicks will be made in Japan for 1984. The Japanese slicks were tested last fall by several AMA racers, and received favorable reports. According to Dunlop, the new race compound should last longer and cost less than last year's English-made slicks.

• Flattrackers get slick: Honda's new flattrack riders, Ricky Graham and Bubba Shobert, might find themselves on asphalt this year. According to team coordinator Udo Gietl, Graham and Shobert might enter roadraces in the Camel Pro Series to pick up additional points that otherwise would be forfeited by the two dirttrack specialists.

• Honda 250 vee-twin: Gietl had some other news, too, concerning Honda's 250 roadracer. It should be available for sale shortly after April, and will cost about $7500.

• Randy Renfrow on an RS500: It looks as though AMA F2 champ Randy Renfrow will not defend his F2 title. Renfrow will be found on a Honda RS500 F1 bike for 1984.

—Dain Gingerelli



Bubba Shobert at the 1983 Superbikers

Getting some asphalt practice.

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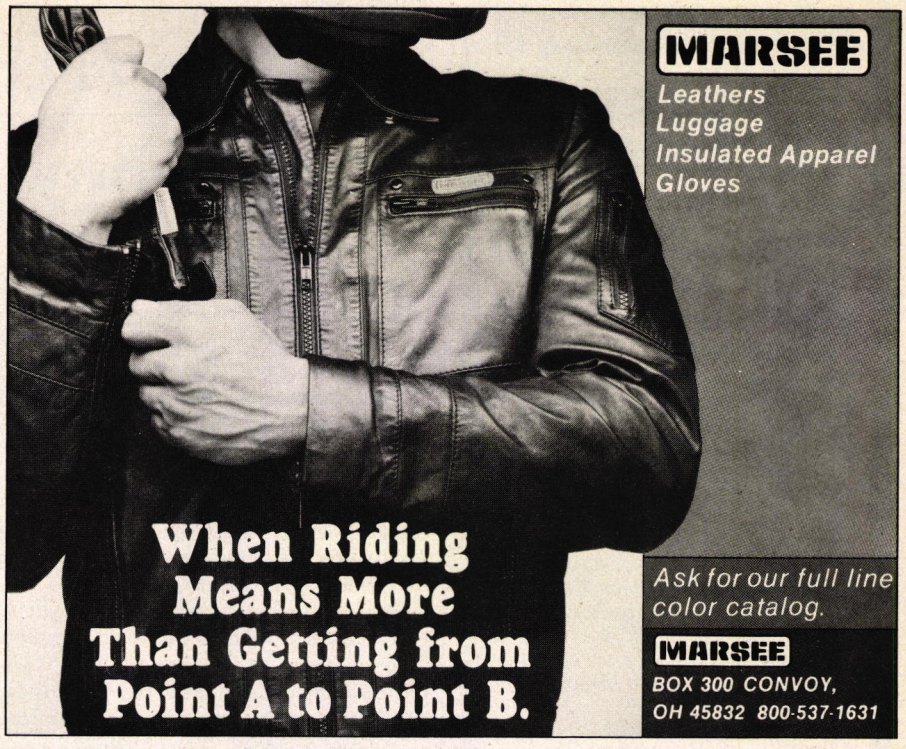

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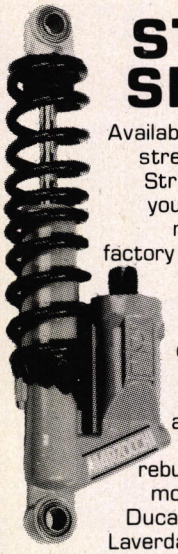

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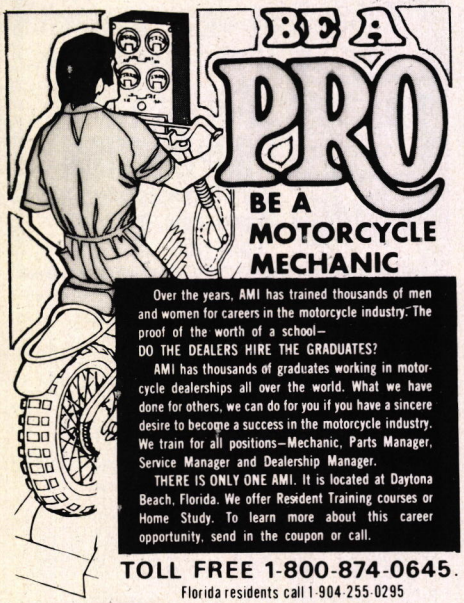

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Winners & Losers

King Kenny Abdicates

Roberts retires—sort of.

• The wait is over. Kenny Roberts, a name almost synonymous with GP roadracing and Yamaha, has retired from motorcycle racing, at least on a full-time basis. The announcement was made at a press conference four days before Christmas. In making the announcement, Yamaha Senior Vice-President Merle Karst made it clear that Roberts would remain with Yamaha as a "Senior Consultant." The position affords Roberts the opportunity to advise on matters both in and out of motorcycle racing.

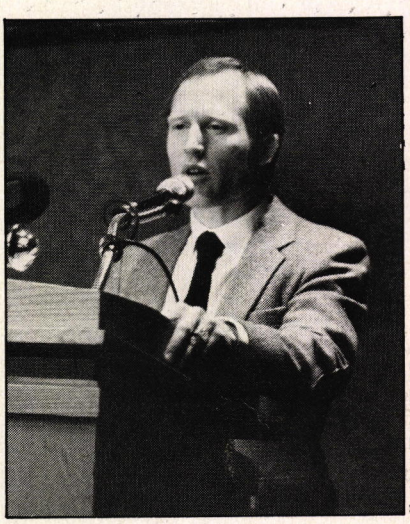
Roberts made it clear, too, that his decision to retire from Grand Prix racing was not financial. "I just no longer found enough enjoyment on the European Grand Prix circuit," he said.

King Kenny indicated his racing career won't come to an abrupt halt, however. He said he will race at "select" American races, and perhaps one or two GPs. But his only *scheduled* race, to date, is for the Laguna Seca National roadrace in July. "The promoters there," he said, "use me for *promotion,* and I appreciate that. It helps the sport, and that's what I want to do now—help the sport of motorcycling become popular with more than just motorcycle people. The way it is in Europe."

Roberts says he's disappointed that motorcycle racers aren't perceived by the American public as sports celebrities. In Europe, he says, racers receive awards and recognition from more than just the industry. And, in a lighthearted moment during the press conference, he noted that racers are given the same adulation as, say, rock stars. "In Europe, the women throw panties at you (the racers)." Clarifying himself after the laughter that followed, he pointed out,"Well, they're empty panties."

But one American citizen who did acknowledge Roberts' illustrious race career was President Ronald Reagan. In a brief, congratulatory telegram (see Pit Bits), he praised Roberts' career achievements as a *motorcycle* racer.

Roberts hinted that he might return to dirttrack racing, too—on a limited basis. The big question, though, is what he will ride. "Obviously," he said, "Yamaha doesn't make a dirttracker." He confirmed that Yamaha gave him the green light to race other brands—in that form of racing only.



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Roberts making the announcement

Showing his new team colors.

But the bottom line of his retirement ("I'm now a full-time businessman, part-time racer.") is that Roberts now has a firmer grip on the promotional end of the business of racing. And to that end, he made it clear that he will help *any* race promoter: "If they (promoters) come to me for help, I'll give it. And it's not a money thing, either. I want to work with everybody—the press, dealers, the race promoters—everybody, to make motorcycle racing in America a respectable sport."

So the King has *officially* abdicated the throne. But his promise to become a spokesman for the sport is a unique opportunity to advance motorcycling, because someone of Roberts' caliber comes along only once in a lifetime.

—Dain Gingerelli

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Kenny Roberts making tracks at Spa

But the train quit running there.

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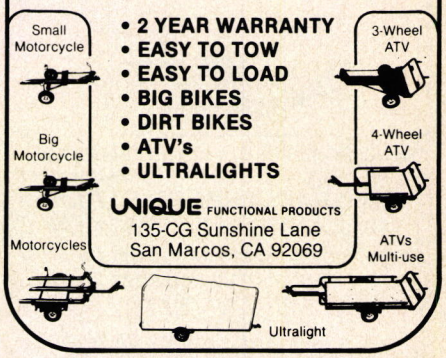

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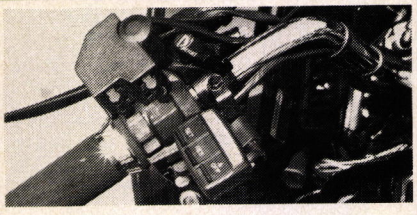

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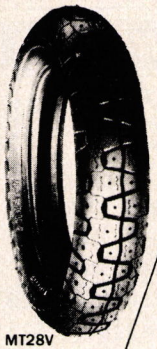

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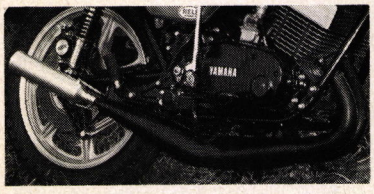

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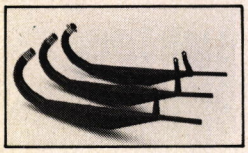

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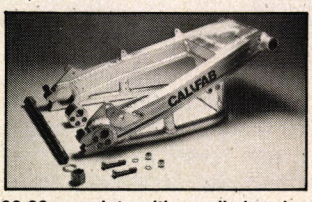

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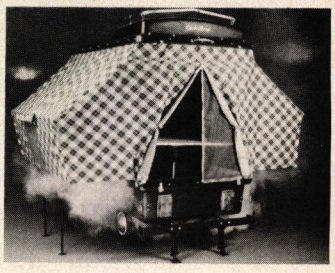

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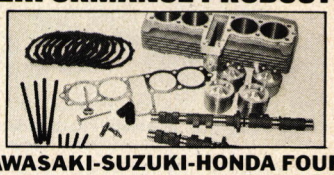
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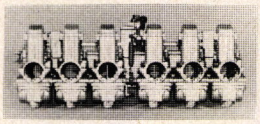
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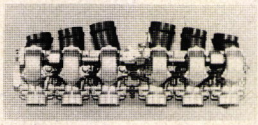
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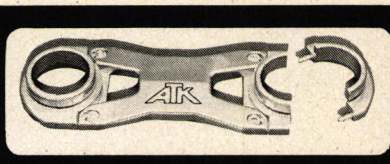
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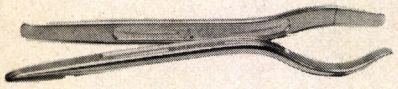
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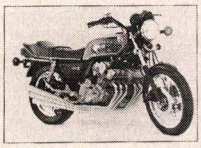

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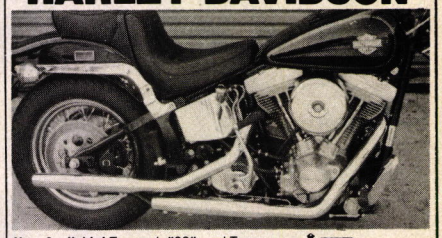

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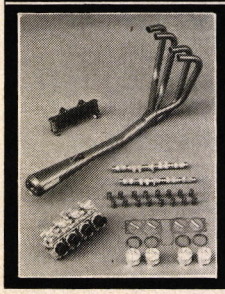

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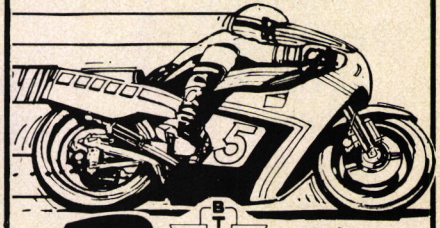

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LETTERS

Japanese monsters, European midgets and South American giants.

FASTEST WHAT?

In your article "Speed Wars," (October 1983), you state that of the five motorcycles tested, the Kawasaki 750 Turbo is "the most potent production machine available now—or ever, for that matter."

While not wishing to argue that the Turbo is perhaps the fastest machine in production today, I believe you overlooked some very fast machines of the past. In your November 1967 issue, Dave Gooley stated the same thing—"the fastest"—about the Vincent Black Lightning. Gooley went on to say that the Vincent Black Lightning had a top speed of 137 mph. In 1948, Rollie Free used a basically stock Black Lightning to set a world speed record of 150.31 mph. Free's Lightning had its front fender removed, the stock seat replaced with a pillion and the engine was highly tuned. Still, the Vincent went more than 5 mph faster than the Turbo. In my opinion, the superbikes of today aren't that much of an improvement over the Vincents, Indians, Harleys and Brough Superiors of the past. Let's give credit where credit is due.

Richard Kotzyba
Phoenix, Arizona

Some of the classic bikes were fast, but "stock" and "basically stock" are worlds apart—almost as far apart as today's superbikes are from those of yesterday—ed.

A REAL QUANDARY

In the December 1983 issue I read up on the new-for-the-U.S. RZ350L, the bike I've been waiting for—a two-stroke. So what do I do? Hock nearly everything and go out and buy one. All I have to do is wait for delivery and I've got the ultimate mid-size sportbike. Right? No. In the January 1984 issue I read that Yamaha might bring the RD500 into this country, and I'll have to have it. Besides selling my first-born, where am I going to get the money for this new killer machine—sell my Interceptor?

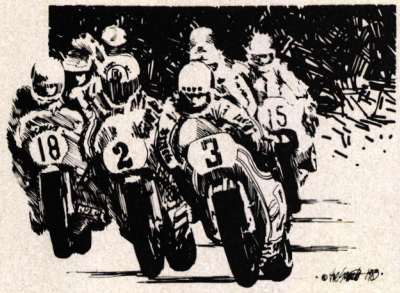
Ray Binder
Chardon, Ohio

APPLES AND ORANGES

I'm getting sick of all the arguments about brand loyalty and which brand is "best." I for one ride motorcycles for the sheer enjoyment of riding. I don't give a hoot about whose machine is "best" where it comes from or what the guy across the street thinks about it. The time has come for all those self-ordained "experts" to drop the argument about whether Honda or Harley makes the perfect machine; the fact is, they aren't even comparable. If all bikes were the same, we'd all be bored to tears with the selection of ho-hum, look-alike machines. I like the fact that if you want a Harley, you can have one, or anything else for that matter. Personal satisfaction with one's own motorcycle is what counts; no more, no less. What do I ride? A Gold Wing, of course. Is there any other bike?

John Shubin
Vernon Hills, Illinois

Do you attach your blinders with wing nuts?—ed.



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HONDA GUIDE, VOL. II, NO. 1

Your January 1984 cover was just too much. Six Honda models listed, the name "Honda" in boldface twice and three photos of Hondas. And in the months to come, I can "look forward" to reading it all again, in depth. I can hardly wait—for my subscription to run out, so I can subscribe to a less biased magazine.

Allen J. Gay
West War, Rhode Island

May we suggest Boy's Life?—ed.

HONDA GUIDE, VOL. II, NO. 2

I am getting a little tired of reading the complaints about your tests of Honda motorcycles. It is obvious to any motorcyclist that Honda has been spending enormous amounts of money on its sporting and dirt bikes. Honda has built, in recent years, some of the best machines on the market. The simple fact is, Honda builds good bikes. Besides, anyone who complains about a Honda probably rides a Suzuki.

L. Omerod
Garden Grove, California

Do you suppose that's Gay's beef?—ed.

TOP-SPEED TIDDLERS

In your January 1984 "Letters" section there was a reference to the top speed of a 50cc motorcycle. Along those lines I would like to give the following information:

In the European roadracing series, the 1980 Kreidler, ridden by Spain's Ricardo Tormo, reached a top speed of 120 mph. The bike produces 22 horsepower. Also, prior to the Kreidler, many 50cc motorcycles have reached a top speed of 110 mph to 115 mph.

The American attitude that you have to have a large bike with large displacement to reach high speeds is based on myth, not fact.

Jack Martin
Dolan Springs, Arizona

True enough, but the letter was referring to a 60 hp, 50cc machine—and that's a myth—ed.

H-D FAILURE

I can't help but respond to Martin DeWulf's letter regarding the legality of the Harley-Davidson ITC case. Mr. DeWulf confuses "law" with justice, honesty and fairness, a mistake too many lawyers make in this country. Harley failed because it tried to sell an inferior product. No law should ever be able to overcome that.

Warren Pegram
Kernersville, North Carolina

That's strange, the last time we checked, H-D was doing just fine—ed.

THE BOYS FROM BRAZIL

How about those Brazilians. Everyone else has been making motorcycles for decades using engines specifically designed for two-wheelers, with the result that only a few dealers can stock the necessary replacement parts. But the Brazilians at Amazonas took what is likely the most common engine available and built a motorcycle around it. Sure saves a lot of money in design and development. The Volkswagen engine's reliability is already established, and VW parts are available throughout the world. Don't you think it deserves a test? It's unique, huge, and I'm sure everyone would be interested in its performance, handling and fuel economy.

Mike Robinette
Annandale, Virginia

At this point, we're looking into having the shop expanded so we can keep one inside—ed. •

Questions or comments? You can talk with the CYCLE GUIDE staff by calling (213) 328-5700. Phones will be answered Monday through Friday, 9 a.m.–5 p.m., Pacific Standard Time.

Some thoughts on motorcycle lubrication from Robert H. Wehman, president and chief engineer of Spectro Oils of America and Intercontinental Lubricants Corp.

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